

World Reformation Activities of the Dark God — Loving Humans So Much, I Reincarnated in One —

Arc 3: Shadow Hero

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Chapter 60: Post-negotiation

Like this, the turmoil that was being being controlled by the Water God Coacervate from the shadows had its curtains fall.

After the battle, it was a given that the whole Hydra Ville was filled with excitement.

A giant monster that attacks the city, the heroes that valiantly stand before this monster in order to protect the city, moreover, there's three of them.

It is common knowledge that the Churches are fighting each other for authority and don't get along, so seeing the heroes fight together was a lot more moving.

Karen-san, Mirack, and Celestis became the center of a festival, and are already to the point that they might even have their names edged in history.

The journalists, that were originally here for the interview of Celestis' live performance, were all unanimously making this matter into an article, and with that, it will most likely fly out from Hydra Ville and spread around the whole world.

The three are not only heroes, they are already to the point that can be considered saviors.

On my end, I knew I would have to handle matters regarding the disappearance of the surface world body of Coacervate, and I had my hands filled with it.

His body was that of a monster mimicking the appearance of a human, so I didn't have to face the burden of becoming a murderer. With all the piled up grudge I had towards him, I ended up kicking his ass.

Even so, that guy took the form of a human, blended into human society, and had a decent amount of status and position, so killing him doesn't mean that's all that's needed to be done.

While I was checking on what that guy had been doing as the manager of the idol Celestis, I also learned about several of his other crimes.

Coacervate had a hold of the Water Church from the shadows, and it was completely under his control.

He grasped the weaknesses of the current Founder of the Water Church and the management, and even has taken some of their families as hostages in order to have them obey.

On top of that, he also tailored the hero into an idol, has made fixed fights with monsters, and has used the Church's believers to play around like crazy.

But now that I have erased the body of Coacervate in the surface world, those people will be released from him.

The higher-ups from the Water Church were truly relieved that the demon that had been controlling them from the shadows had vanished, and were happy to lend a hand in concealing his death.

After that, I used the connections that Coacervate left behind to make negotiations with the Water Church's higher-ups and resolved the friction that the idol activities of the idol Celestis was causing to the other churches.

To be more specific, remove all the many benefits that the Celestis fan club obtains from entering the Water Church officially, and don't do any open proselytizing towards the fans.

With this, the Water Church believers and the Celestis fans were divided in a sense, and became separate existences.

Of course, I don't think this will solve the root of the problem, but the rest can be decided by the higher-ups of the churches.

The Water Church was surprisingly positive about this kind of reformation, and now that the influence of Coacervate is gone, they took the initiative to accept my proposal.

They must have considered it a risk to use the singing and dancing of the hero to increase their believers since it might make the image of the Church be perceived as superficial.

That's why I prolonged the negotiation for a bit more because I had to bring it to a point where they assured me that Celestis will still be able to continue her

idol activities.

The time required for this was several days of discussion.

In that time, Karen-san, Mirack, and Celestis participated in the extra live performances as scheduled, and it seems they passed a meaningful time.

And so...

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“Aaah, that was tough. The fight with the Great Sea Dragon was really tough you know~.”

“That’s right. Ouch ouch ouch!”

My spine was creaking from the pain of the camel clutch.

To explain what’s happening, Mirack was straddling on my back while I was lying down, and just like that, she is pulling my jaw and forcefully turning it.

The so called Camel Clutch.

It seems this is also a killer technique passed down by the Ignis Militant corps.

It is an incredibly dangerous technique that inflicts damage to the spine, that’s why I was going ‘ouch ouch’ when suffering from it.

And more than that, the sensation of Mirack’s crotch at my back.

This sensation of pain and happiness; is she doing it while being aware of this?

“Did

you know this, Haine? A big sea monster on the level of Phalaris was defeated by Karen, Celestis, and I, you know? It was a fierce fight.” (Mirack)

“Yes, I heard about it. Ouch ouch ouch!” (Haine)

“In that time, where were you playing around at?” (Mirack)

“Sorry. I am really sorry!” (Haine)

Because I was absent in the Hydra Serpent incident, it ended up being seen as very disgraceful.

There’s no way I could say that Coacervate and I were keeping each other in

check.

Mirack also saw my ability against the fire cow Phalaris, so fooling her won't work.

And so, I am in the middle of receiving a normal punishment for a truant.

"Why don't you spare him with that, Mirack-chi?" (Celestis)

And the water hero, Celestis, was in the middle of spectating this punishment.

"I know that Haine-chi is incredibly reliable, but...involving himself in a battle between monsters and heroes would be a bit too much. Moreover, it was a sea battle, and when you miss the chance of receiving the 'Water Blessing' once, there's nothing you can do, right? Are you telling him to swim all the way there?" (Celestis)

"Shut up, Celestis. This guy is a lot more reliable than you think." (Mirack)

"I don't know if you have expectations of him or not... Whichever it is, why don't you stop that super glued submission technique?" (Celestis)

"Hm?"

"No matter how much of your female side you have thrown away, gluing yourself this much to a man is just...erotic." (Celestis)

"Uhya!" (Mirack)

Looks like she finally noticed her own lack of self-awareness. Mirack jumps away from me.

I'm saved~~. A bit more and I might have split in two.

"Oooh! Mirack-chi's girly scream, how rare! Thanks, Haine-chi. Thanks to you, I was able to hear something rare." (Celestis)

"I'm glad to see you are happy." (Haine)

Though, if the price of that is one spine, the rate is a bit too high there.

By the way, the water hero Celestis announced in the ending of the live performance that she will be taking a temporary rest in her idol activities.

With the disappearance of Coacervate, the Water Church did a coup. There's

no way this wouldn't affect her as well.

She was directly involved with Coacervate who was posing as her manager, so there was the need to give proper explanations.

'Because of the confusion in the Water Church, the manager had hurriedly changed posts', is the excuse that was made, and for now, it seems she consented to it.

In the first place, he was suspicious and wasn't a manager that was liked, so Celestis probably didn't have much interest in it.

Until the next manager is assigned, it seems like Celestis will be taking a small vacation.

"By the way, Haine-chi, I will be repeating myself here but, how about becoming my new manager? Or more like, become my manager!" (Celestis)

"As I have been saying, I can't. I am the assistant of the light hero after all." (Haine)

Also, why did you correct yourself and made it into an order?

"Tch, what a loyal one. With Haine-chi's negotiation abilities, I thought he would be able to face those hard-headed people you know~. The Church suddenly told me to restrain in the idol activities, and I just don't understand at all." (Celestis)

"It probably just means that's how shocking the Great Sea Dragon turmoil was. They will most likely have you concentrate on your hero activities and prepare yourself in case of need. Isn't that normal? Obey." (Mirack)

"It is because of those dangerous times that idol's exist. With the singing and dancing of Celes-tan, I will provide hope." (Celestis)

Looks like she won't change no matter what happens.

Celestis is a hero that not only fights with divine power, she also fights by giving hope to the people. That's also a splendid form of hero.

"Well, just leave the scolding to that much. Haine-chi, how about you go to the next one?" (Celestis)

“Next one?” (Haine)

“It seems your direct superior has some words of praise for you. She is waiting for you at her room.” (Celestis)

“?”

Praise?

Did I do something worthy of praise?

Well, at any rate, I can't just stand here when I have been urged to go. Let's leave the room for now.

If I stay here doing nothing, I feel like the punishment of Mirack might resume.

I head to the door, and when I passed the side of Mirack, I heard a low voice that barely reached my ears.

“.....Thanks.” (Mirack)

“Eh?”

I heard Mirack whispering to me and it made me even more confused. Even so, I had no choice so I left the room just like that.

When talking about my direct superior, there's only that person, right?

Chapter 61: The hero that became the reward

“Karen-saaan, did you call?” (Haine)

The place I arrived at is one of the guest rooms of the Water Church.

It is the room that was provided to the light hero, Karen-san. Karen-san has been sleeping here in these several days, so if she is somewhere, it should be here, so I tried entering the room, but...

This is weird. I don't see her anywhere.

But I do feel the presence of someone.

“Haine-san! So you have come!”

So you really were here, Karen-san.

But where is she? I don't see her at all.

“Mirack and Celestis told me to come here but, am I intruding you in the middle of something? If that's the case, I will come back here another time.”
(Haine)

I guess that's the reason why she isn't showing herself, but it looks like that wasn't the case.

“No, I was waiting for Haine-san. Please sit wherever you want.” (Karen)

“Okay...if you say so...” (Haine)

“If possible, in front of the closet...” (Karen)

Closet?

“F-First of all, Haine-san, thank you for that time. You have saved us a lot again.” (Karen)

“I didn't participate this time around though. I was receiving a punishment for that very same reason not that long ago.” (Haine)

“No, Mirack-chan also understands. That was most definitely her way of hiding her embarrassment.” (Karen)

Her hiding almost cost me a spine though.

From there, the conversation was temporarily cut off, and silence took place. And then, the one who once again resumed the conversation was Karen-san.

“.....It was Haine-san there, right?” (Karen)

“Hm? What do you mean by that?” (Haine)

“I mean that Black Giant.” (Karen)

Aah.

She is talking about the Dark element monster I created in order to help Karen-san and the others fight the Hydra Serpent.

Because I had to keep Coacervate in check, this was a desperate measure I thought with incredible pain.

Karen-san knows that I am a dark element user, but creating monsters is the deed of Gods.

I can't just obediently say yes to this.

In the end, that Black Giant was not only seen by the heroes, but also by many other people, but it only became the seed of much confusion, and with the hard struggle of the heroes, this other point didn't become the topic of talk.

A monster that protects humans; such an existence that overturns the common sense of humans, even when seeing it with their own eyes, it was still something hard to believe.

That's why, the mass media also didn't know how to handle this information and just ignored it, and didn't even become an article.

“It is okay, you don't have to answer me. But, when I was fighting together at the sea with the Black Giant, I felt as if I was fighting together with Haine-san. Even though it was such a dangerous situation, I was really at peace.” (Karen)

“Karen-san...” (Haine)

“I think Mirack-chan was the same. That's why I wanted to express my gratitude. Thanks.” (Karen)

Karen-san still didn't show herself, but her feelings reached me plenty well.

Gratitude, deep affection, goodwill; those kind of feelings.

“A-And so...!” (Karen)

“Hm?”

For some reason, the tone of Karen-san suddenly became unrestful.

“It wouldn’t feel right to always just say thank you, so this time, I want to express my gratitude in a more substantial way!” (Karen)

“Substantial?” (Haine)

No, there’s no need to mind it that much though.

“...Haine-san, you are properly in front of the closet, right?” (Karen)

“Y-Yes?” (Haine)

For a while now, I have been bothered by this but, the voice of Karen-san...I feel like it is coming from this closet...

The closet, in other words, the place where the clothes are kept. Even if it is the guest room, this is the guest room that the Water Church lodges their guests of honor, so it has quite the splendid closet, and big enough to have at least one person inside.

Then, is she actually inside this...

“Haine-san, please watch closely, okay? 3...2...1!!!” (Karen)

Why are you doing a countdown?!

It was clear for anyone that I had to nail my eyes to the closet when the number reached 0.

And then, the closet opened with a ‘bam’ from the inside.

“Haine-san!!” (Karen)

“Karen-san?!!” (Haine)

Karen-san was naked.

No, she was in her underwear, so, accurately speaking, she wasn’t completely naked, but even so, she was showing most of her skin which was practically being naked.

She is normally wearing armor and completely equipped on all her body, so this made this lightly dressed figure of hers even more dazzling. At any rate, her skin is white. I heard before that she had a 'weak constitution in the past', and with this, I can believe it.

The color of her underwear is also white. Pure white is the symbol color of the Light Goddess, Inflation.

お節焼きです、ね、ハイネさんは

ボツリと、カレンさんの頭部が僕の体に倒れ掛かっていた。
髪の中の柔らかさという匂いが伝わってきた。
「えっ？」
いきなりなのでドキギした。
魂は揺でも肉体は十八歳の健全な男子。
可愛い女の子には普通に反応する。



“Okay, over!” (Karen)

“Eh?!” (Haine)

Karen-san quickly closed the closet and locked herself again.

In the end, the dazzling pure white underwear figure of Karen-san only lasted for an instant in my eyes.

“How was it, Haine-san?! Are you happy?!” (Karen)

Karen-san asks me from the wooden closet.

What?

“No well, leaving aside my happiness, is this your way of thanking me?! Is that okay?! This has so many problematic points as a hero!” (Haine)

“It is fine! Because Haine-san..... you also saw the underwear of Celestis-san!!” (Karen)

.....Ah.

Right before the attack of the Hydra Serpent at the live performance, I do feel like such an accident did occur when Celestis was changing her stage outfit...

“Does that mean...you were getting competitive with Celestis?” (Haine)

Even so, her shyness made her only endure it for an instant of showing me huh.

I don’t get you, Karen-san. I really don’t get you.

“...And? How was it? Did I win?” (Karen)

“Karen-san is unexpectedly concerned with winning and losing.” (Haine)

And like this, I once again took a peek of a mysterious side of Karen-san.

My last night at Hydra Ville passed by in this way, but as expected, I have to say this before it is over.

“I was happy.” (Haine)

Chapter 62: The Dark God that became the reward

I became a sacrifice.

The price of victory, success, and to kick the ass of the guy that annoyed me; for the sake of that, I became a sacrifice.

“Haine-san.”

“Yes?” (Haine)

“I love you.”

“...Yes.” (Haine)

The place is the Light Church, in Yorishiro’s room. That’s how it is called, but it is actually the tiger’s den.

“Haine-san~~.”

“Yes?” (Haine)

“I love you~~.”

“...Yes.” (Haine)

To explain what’s happening, I was made to sit down on the sofa that was in the room, Yorishiro placed a bed cover on me, is rubbing her cheeks together with mine, and is drawing circles on my chest with her finger over and over.

Looks like she is truly having fun.

I can’t push her away and can’t resist either.

Because that’s the kind of deal we had.

In the big sea battle the other day at Hydra Ville, in order to outwit the Water God Coacervate who was the wire puller of it all, I worked out a plan.

Thanks to the help of a powerful ally, the heroes were able to splendidly defeat the 8-headed Great Sea Dragon.

And so...

What I had to do in order to create that monster was...to first learn how to

make it.

Monsters are made by Gods.

This is a secret of the world, but it is the truth.

I -Kuromiya Haine-am also a human, and at the same time, am the reincarnation of the Dark God Entropy.

I do have the qualifications to create monsters, but since I was sealed for 1,600 years, I have been estranged from the worldly affairs and ended up not knowing how to create monsters.

And so, the one I relied on in that time of emergency was this person; the Light Church's founder, Yorishiro.

She can also be called the reincarnation of the Light Goddess, Inflation.

Different from me, she is a God that had been going strong for those 1,600 years, so when I tried asking if she knew, it was right on the mark.

The information she gave me played a big part in the victory a few days ago. And so, the price I had to pay for that was also big.

In the first place, this woman wouldn't do something so admirable as teaching things for free.

In exchange for the way of creating monsters, the condition given was to...

Utilize me freely for one whole day.

...That's how it is.

And so, here I am, in the middle of fulfilling this one day.

"Haine-san~. Haine-san, please say you love me too." (Yorishiro)

"I-I love you too..." (Haine)

"Me too. Ufufu~~" (Yorishiro)

This woman really looks happy.

The moment night ended and it was early in the morning, she immediately called me to her room and we have been like this for the whole time. Well, it is the freedom to use me for one day, so I should at least be grateful that she

began utilizing it early in the morning.

“Haine-san~.” (Yorishiro)

“Yes yes, what is it?” (Haine)

“Please marry me.” (Yorishiro)

“No.” (Haine)

“Eh?!” (Yorishiro)

Yorishiro glares at me displeased.

“This is not what we agreed on, Haine-san! You will listen to anything I say for this whole day, right?!” (Yorishiro)

“And that’s exactly what we agreed on. When we were arranging the conditions, we also agreed that I would

only

listen to your requests in this day. So, requests that carry on to other days don’t count.” (Haine)

If I didn’t do that, I wouldn’t have been able to agree on such a condition with a scary woman like this.

The requests I will listen to are things that can be accomplished in this one day.

Requests that take more than one day no matter where you look at it are a no. Requests that restrain me on other days are also a no.

Matters like marrying that bind me for life are of course out.

“Buuh~, Haine-san, you bully..... T-Then, how about the embrace between a man and a woman?!” (Yorishiro)

What shameless things is this woman saying.

“That’s also a no. If a baby is made, it would drag on further than my life.” (Haine)

“Haine-san, you cheapskate! This is a no, that is a no! You are not listening to anything I ask! You liar!” (Yorishiro)

“You are the one that’s not following the condition. I can revoke the agreement itself on the grounds of rule breaking, you know?” (Haine)

“I’m sorry, I got ahead of myself. Please let us stay like this.” (Yorishiro)

“So desperate!” (Haine)

I seriously don’t understand this woman.

It was the same 1,600 years ago, but I am simply unable to read what she is thinking at all, and there’s no area that I can grasp.

“Geez... Ah, right. In that case, I want to ask you about something...”
(Yorishiro)

“If it’s something like who I like the most, it is a no, okay?” (Haine)

“Please don’t be so cautious. Geez... It is about Coacervate-san. Was that okay?” (Yorishiro)

“Yeah.” (Haine)

The Water God, Coacervate.

He was the wire puller in last time’s incident and the prime offender.

He was a God, and yet, reincarnated in a monster that had the ability to mimic a human, and controlled human society in the shadows without growing old or falling ill.

I erased that body of his without leaving a single trace behind, but...

“That guy is a God. Even if his body is destroyed, his soul will return to the God realm, and it won’t hurt him or itch him one bit. If you were going to defeat him, wouldn’t it have been better to do it like in the case of Nova-san, restraining him in his body with the soul still in it?” (Yorishiro)

It is just as Yorishiro said. At that time, my anger reached its very peak, and killed him in the mood.

I have to admit I lost my composure there.

“But the enemy is a shrewd God. It wouldn’t go as easy as the simple-minded Nova. The body he was using had a dirty ability like mimicking. If he wasn’t restrained to an incredible level, he would escape instantly.” (Haine)

“In that case, ‘it would be better to just kill him given the chance, and at least crush all the groundwork he currently had laid out’, is what you are trying to say huh. Coacervate-san is probably mortified at the God Realm.” (Yorishiro)

That’s right. He wasn’t only scheming a fixed fight at the sea live performance. He had a lot of other ill-natured plans on the process while he was advancing this one plan.

And in truth, after defeating him, I did my best to crush as many seeds of discord he left in the Water Church with the short amount of time I had in Hydra Ville.

“But, I am surprised you are bothered about those kind of things. Do you feel some sort of camaraderie as Gods?” (Haine)

“Please stop that. Since the time we sealed you in that fight, I have practically not talked to him at all.” (Yorishiro)

Uwaa.

Just how hated is that guy?

“More importantly, this is the most happiest day since reincarnating in this body as Yorishiro. Just forget about an underhanded guy like him and let’s have fun……. And so, Haine-san, the next request.” (Yorishiro)

“Yes yes, a request that can be done today, right?” (Haine)

‘Of course’, is what Yorishiro said filled with confidence.

“Let’s have a date.” (Yorishiro)

Chapter 63: Holiday in Apollon City

And so, we are outside.

Apollon City is one of the cities that has one of the five Churches' headquarters.

Of course, it has a fitting population, size, and defenses; a large metropolis that is prominent in all areas.

Because of the ethereal energy revolution that occurred, the living standard increased, and there are even cars that run around the city on their own energy.

The buildings have also become bigger and multistoried ones are lined up more frequently.

"I have really gotten used to this sight." (Haine)

The first time I came to this city after leaving my village, everything I saw was novel, and I was moving my head like a chicken.

So I am a city person already huh.

"Haine-san, the streets in the city are congested, so in order to not bump into other people, it is best to hold hands when walking-desu wa." (Yorishiro)

"What?! But the other people are not doing that!" (Haine)

"That's because they are pros at living in the city. For a beginner that has just been introduced to the city, your evasion technique is still crude, so please give me your hand." (Yorishiro)

"I see, so that's how it is!" (Haine)

I lift my hand.

"It is a lie. Ufufufu." (Yorishiro)

"Damn it!" (Haine)

The light founder-sama is a person that likes joking.

And that Yorishiro is currently in pretty normal clothing. Wearing a well-

tailored one piece, even when looking at her from afar, one can tell that she is from a good upbringing.

No one would be able to tell the founder of the Light Church, who is basically the ruler of this city, is in the middle of an incognito date.

“You are normally wearing a veil in public to hide your face. No surprise that regular citizens can’t see through your identity.” (Haine)

Even if I say identity, it is not the one about being a God, but the one about being the light founder, Yorishiro-sama.

“Yeah, I have been hiding my face because I knew a day like this would come. This time we are spending with just the two of us, if we were surrounded by bodyguards and onlookers, it would be annoying.” (Yorishiro)

Just how much has she been looking forward to this date with me?

By the way, even with that, when we passed by with our linked arms, there were a lot of pedestrians that glanced at us.

Yorishiro is just naturally cute after all.

Karen-san, Mirack, and Celestis; the girls that I have met until now have their own taste and were beautiful, but as expected, Yorishiro is on another level of beauty.

It is truly a beauty molded by the Gods, or more like, that’s exactly the case though.

“And so, princess, is there anywhere you want to go?” (Haine)

Since I said I will be listening to anything today, it can’t be helped.

I will satisfy this lady to a degree that doesn’t hurt me in the future.

“I will be leaving that to Haine-san -desu wa.” (Yorishiro)

“Oi.” (Haine)

You were the one who brought me out, so don’t you have a plan?

“Ara, in these moments, isn’t the man supposed to be the one doing the escorting?” (Yorishiro)

The eyes of Yorishiro, who said this, had the light of a bully in them.

So she intends to enjoy the flustered state of this country bumpkin huh.

But too naive. Learn that this Kuromiya Haine has no blind spots!

“Understood! Well then, I will escort you to my recommended date spots!”
(Haine)

“Eh?!” (Yorishiro)

Having her linked arm pulled by me, Yorishiro was filled with surprise and confusion.

“Too naive, Goddess-sama. The things you would say, I have already predicted them beforehand. I already knew you would be bringing me out on a date with that one day privilege you got, so yesterday, I already researched on those kind of stores!” (Haine)

Got ya there.

Seeing this date plan that has no blind spot and unable to say a single complain, I will watch and laugh at Yorishiro’s mortified figure.

When I turn to the side to look at the crushed expression of hers...eh?

What I saw was an expression that was contrary to what I was expecting. Her eyes were moist and glittering, and her face was filled with joy.

“Does that mean...for my sake?” (Yorishiro)

I don’t know if she is asking me or talking to herself; after making such a hard to distinct mutter...

“Haine-san, I love you!!!” (Yorishiro)

“Ooou?!” (Haine)

The arm that was wrapped around hers in the first place was being held with extreme force now!

“As I thought, let’s marry! I will decide the destination of our date! The church! After making our pledge, I will thoroughly enjoy the date plan that Haine-san made, and then...!” (Yorishiro)

“Eh?! It had the opposite effect?!” (Haine)

What I thought would make her mortified actually pleased her instead.

Or more like, isn't the church the place where you are living in?!

Since we both received answers we didn't expect, should this be considered a draw?

The first match was muddy, and our date had only just started.

Chapter 64: Date a Live*

**Reference to anime of the same name* And so, I escorted Yorishiro to the many recommended spots.

Cafe, confectionery, an okonomiyaki store, a pasta-specialized store, seafood store, a pizza store...

“.....All of them were food stores-desu wa ne.” (Yorishiro)

“Yeah.” (Haine)

The one who recommended me these date spots was my friend in the kitchen days, Frost.

Since the time I graduated from the kitchen and became a hero assistant, he has still been doing his best in the kitchen.

And all the stores that he recommended to me were eateries. Isn't he getting dyed by the cook soul at a fundamental level?

Seeing these many varieties of eateries at the streets does make me understand how much the ethereal development has affected many sides of society, but after going around so many of them, as expected, my stomach is already completely full.

Leaving me aside, girls have a smaller stomach, and Yorishiro doesn't look like she can eat that much, and yet, she said: 'there's no way I would leave food in the stores that Haine-san has brought me to', and ate everything without leaving anything behind. Even when I tried to stop her in the middle of it, she said: 'this is the date plan that Haine-san made, I will go through all of them', and in the end, we ended up conquering all the stores.

“Are you okay?! Sorry! You didn't have to force yourself to eat everything!” (Haine)

“No...! Uppu... there's no problem-desu wa. This is my first date with Haine-san. Guuh... I am currently in perfect form... ppu...” (Yorishiro)

Don't lie. You are already on the verge of breaking down!

At any rate, we have to find a place to rest! I can't bring the Founder-sama to a dirty water fountain!

Even so, we can't go to an eatery or a popular resting spot. Right now, Yorishiro is completely filled, and one push would make her release everything!

Isn't there a place that doesn't smell of food at all and we can rest?

"...Ah, right!" (Haine)

That place.

"...I see, the library huh."

Yorishiro, who regained her composure, muttered this.

That's right. This is the grand library located at the central section of Apollon City. Since it is a place for reading, there's a lot of places here where you can sit and relax.

From the information that I got of Frost, this is the only place that wasn't an eatery. 'It is great that you can sit for free', is the random reason he gave me for this recommendation, but anyways, it saved me at this moment.

"Are you okay? Do you want me to rub your back more?" (Haine)

"No, it is plenty already. As I thought, Haine-san is kind." (Yorishiro)

I feel like my points with her have increased pointlessly.

"But it has been a while since I have come here. I have been busy lately after all." (Yorishiro)

"Hm? You like books?" (Haine)

"It isn't that. I am the Founder of the Light Church, so there are plenty of times when I come here for public facility inspections." (Yorishiro)

Ah, so that's what it was.

"The diplomatic side has been restless lately, so the times I have gone for inspections and visits has decreased though..... Did you know, Haine-san? This grand library of Apollon City has the biggest scale and has the most amount of

books in the world. It is the pride of the people living in Apollon City, you know.” (Yorishiro)

“Hoh, so it is such a big deal.” (Haine)

Treasure knowledge; that can be considered one of the primary factors that make a human.

That feeling was passed on properly even in these modern times.

“But there was a plan of reducing the scale of this library.” (Yorishiro)

“Oi.” (Haine)

“The creed of the Light Church and its history, they said that all publications that have no relation to those kind of things have no worth. There’s also books about ethereal techniques, and they said: ‘that’s the very definition of harmful books’.” (Yorishiro)

“What’s with that? Does that mean everything that’s not convenient for them is evil?” (Haine)

“I did stop them and avoided the massive book burning that might have occurred, but...the current Light Church is mostly like this. Only they are correct, everyone that’s not the same as them is inferior or evil.” (Yorishiro)

She is literally the most important person of the Light Church in two meanings. She is their founder and also the Light Goddess Inflation that the Church worships.

And she is saying this while sighing.

“Did you know, Haine-san? Right now, the upper echelon seats of the Light Church are mostly hereditary.” (Yorishiro)

“Eh? Really?” (Haine)

“I myself am the daughter of the previous founder. That’s why, as long as I thought on where to reincarnate, I could have easily become the founder. Aside from that, there’s the Cardinal, Great Priest, and the Knight Commander; all of them are jobs that have a set household. Haine-san, did you know this as well? When entering the knight corps, you had to get your element identified in advance on the pretence of an exam, didn’t you?” (Yorishiro)

“Yeah, there was that.” (Haine)

“The current Knight Commander, Dobbe-san, do you know the light element number he has?” (Yorishiro)

“Eh, could it be?!” (Haine)

“His household, the Severphon household, is a household that has been turning in great numbers of Light Church upper echelon members for around 20 generations. The higher-ups of the Light Church are filled with those kind of people. People that have been sitting at the top for so long, drinking the sweet nectar, and were unable to live without it....just like ‘those’ ones.” (Yorishiro)

?

“That’s why, they are most scared of falling from the top. Because they can’t live anywhere aside from that place after all. They hardened that position with their blood relatives, and they refuse it the most when someone new enters. If someone were to get close to them, they would do their utmost to eliminate that person.” (Yorishiro)

“Like that time with me?” (Haine)

“Yeah, and also Karen-san as well. Only the post of the hero that has no impurity in it and is chosen purely by ability can’t be passed on hereditarily.” (Yorishiro)

So this is the so called depravity of an organization huh.

It is true that groups do rot the longer they persist. No matter what it is, once the flow is lost, it will stagnate, become impure, and deteriorate.

That’s why, there will be times when a revolutionary will appear and create a windhole, and then change the inside with new things, but...

“Are you not going to do it?” (Haine)

“What exactly?” (Yorishiro)

“A reformation. You are in the position of a Founder, and coupled with your wisdom as the Light Goddess, wouldn’t it be easy to wipe out the old influential powers?” (Haine)

From what I see, she doesn't look like she agrees with the decay of the Light Church after all.

When I said this, Yorishiro smiled sadly.

"Haine-san, there are times when a way too excellent leader will instead become harmful for the group, you know?" (Yorishiro)

The side view of Yorishiro was beautiful as always, but it somehow looked like an old woman who has lived several centuries.

"Excuse me, the two over there."

I was about to continue the conversation, but we were called out by someone.

"Can you please keep it down in the library? It will trouble the other people."

"Ah, sorry—?!)" (Haine)

It is true that a library is not a place to talk.

When I was in the middle of apologizing, my whole body froze.

Because the person that cautioned us from behind was...

"Hi there, Haine-san. What a coincidence meeting in a place like this, right?"

The light hero, Karen-san.

Chapter 65: Library War

The light hero, Karen-san, who I work as an assistant for. If we talk of Yorishiro as the peak of the Light Church, then Karen-san is truly the face of the Light Church.

The two holy women that the Church cannot be without, have reunited in this place.

“Karen-san?! Why?!” (Haine)

“I wonder why? This is truly a coincidence. Fufufufu~~!” (Karen)

Karen-san was laughing with her mouth, but her eyes were not laughing.

She was looking at me with those freezing cold eyes of hers.

“I also have my free days as a hero, you know? Is it that bad to be in a facility of my homeland?” (Karen)

“Ah...and so, Karen-san, today you are in casual clothes huh. This is the first time I see you in those, it looks cute.” (Haine)

“Thanks. But Haine-san, you yourself have quite the cute girl accompanying you.” (Karen)

Karen-san’s gaze increases even more in coldness, and I was about to freeze by the decrease in temperature here!

Why is Karen-san so scary when we only met by coincidence in the city?!

“Also, Yorishiro-sama, how do you do?” (Karen)

“Ara, so you knew.” (Yorishiro)

“If it were someone else, it would be a different story, but I have a lot of audiences with Yorishiro-sama almost every day, so even if you take off your veil, I can tell by your voice and presence.” (Karen)

Yorishiro stands up from her seat and glares at Karen-san with an upright posture.

Karen-san was standing upright from the very beginning.

Bigi bigi bigi bigi!

The sounds that I shouldn't be able to hear from the atmosphere were jumping right into my ears!

"Is it okay to ask you one question, Founder-sama?" (Karen)

"Go ahead." (Yorishiro)

"What are you doing alone with Haine-san? Haine-san is supposed to have work at the knight corps today as well." (Karen)

"Ara, I am surprised you know, hero." (Yorishiro)

"Haine-san is my assistant after all. More importantly, answer my question please. What are you two doing here?" (Karen)

"A date." (Yorishiro)

"?!!" (Karen)

Maybe because she said it so straightforwardly, Karen-san stiffened without being able to say anything more.

"A date. It is the act of a man and a woman playing outside with just the two of them. Of course, it is not as acquaintances or as friends; there's the need of both parties to view each other as members of the opposite sex or it wouldn't be considered a date. By the way, I have changed Haine-san's work today to a paid leave. With my authority." (Yorishiro)

"Uhm...! T-Then, you two are...!" (Karen)

How can you be so decisive, Yorishiro-san?

It was so assertive that even Karen-san has been dumbfounded by it.

"But please don't misunderstand." (Yorishiro)

"Eh?"

"Today's date is more of a reward from Haine-san for me. Haine-san made a debt with me, in order to save you." (Yorishiro)

"Save me?!" (Karen)

Being told this, Karen-san gets even more confused.

Yorishiro didn't reveal everything, but it makes me uneasy how much she will be telling.

"In order to return that debt, Haine-san is keeping me company. That's why, Karen-san, there's no need to be jealous. You should instead be happy. Haine-san went so far for you." (Yorishiro)

Even if she says that, so many important parts are hazy, so there's no way Karen-san would understand it.

'This will be hard to smooth over later' is what I thought when...

"But, putting all those things aside, I love Haine-san." (Yorishiro)

Those few words of Yorishiro blew away everything. Blew away everything complicated.

"Hah?!"

"Haah?!"

Karen-san and I shouted at that way too explosive of a statement.

"There's no lie in this. As a woman, I love the man Haine-san. Even if this is to repay a debt, spending a day with Haine-san makes me incredibly happy. I am thinking about having a relationship with Haine-san on a level where we both love each other. For that sake, I will not hesitate in doing what I can." (Yorishiro)

What are you saying?! What are you blurting out here, Yorishiro?!

Why in this timing, in this place, and with this person in specific are you spilling out so much?!

How am I going to face Karen-san from tomorrow on! Are you planning on destroying all my human relations?!

"!!!"

Karen-san was probably unable to take on all that intensity, she hides her completely red face.

'It would probably be better for me to do some kind of follow-up here', is what I thought as I was going to cut into the conversation, but...

"...Then, I also have something to say to Founder-sama!" (Karen)

“What is it?” (Yorishiro)

“I also love Haine-san!!” (Karen)

And Karen-san went and confessed too?!

Leaving aside Yorishiro, Karen-san as well?!

I could only get surprised now.

“It was love at first sight since the moment I met him..... No, in the time when I scouted Haine-san, it was more like I was charmed by him as a reliable companion and a person I can share my values with. But in the time I spend together with him and fought together with him, I was slowly being pulled in, and a deep affection that surpassed camaraderie and friendship blossomed, and from that moment on, I began to be aware that I am a woman.” (Karen)

“That’s splendid-desu wa, Karen-san.” (Yorishiro)

“That’s why, I will say this clearly. Founder-sama –no, Yorishiro-sama, you having a date with Haine-san is incredibly unpleasant! Even if you tell me that was for my sake, it doesn’t make me happy at all! Haine-san is...the person that will become my boyfriend!!” (Karen)

I honestly can’t keep up with the pace of this situation.

Looks like two women are fiercely competing over one man. And apparently, that man is me.

I can understand that. But there are situations where, even if you understand, you simply don’t want to. For the first time today, I have learned this.

“That was a great confession. As expected of our hero.” (Yorishiro)

“You as well, Yorishiro-sama. Even though you have less chances of being in contact with Haine-san, at some point in time, you were able to get a date. That shrewdness, as expected of our Founder.” (Karen)

“Ufufu.”

“Fufufu.”

Women are scary.

Now then, how should I move in this situation?

If I simply follow my instincts, it would be to leave it as if nothing has happened, and retreat from this place right this instant.

Or more like, I want to do that. Let's do it.

With my heart set, I tried to retreat without making a sound, but...

"Haine-san."

"...Yes?" (Haine)

I was easily stopped.

"Since we are here, let's hear the opinion of Haine-san." (Yorishiro)

"Right, that's exactly right. Haine-san, Yorishiro-sama or I..." (Karen)

""Who do you want as your girlfriend?""

Chapter 66: The two holy women

Being in this situation I didn't expect at all, I ended up cornered.

'Why did it turn out this way?', is the only thing I can think of this.

At one side, there's the female Founder that controls one of the most prominent five churches in the world, moreover, she is a Goddess; on the other hand, the female hero that represents that same church.

I have been confessed by both sides.

I don't know what would be the best way to deal with this.

In the first place, this Kuromiya Haine has not received the love of a woman of the same age since the time I was born.

The village I was born in didn't have that many people after all. On top of that, there were many occasions where I helped with my father in his job as a hunter, so my chances at interacting with people of my age weren't that many.

And naturally, there were practically no instances where I spoke with women.

There were occasional times where I would get asked by girls about 'wanting to pick edible wild plants' and I accompanied them as a bodyguard since my job was a hunter. As a show of gratitude, they told me 'I will treat you with a feast of edible plant dishes', and was called to the girl's house. And while at it, she also told me 'it is late so, how about staying the night here?' sorry, it seems I really did have times when I was confessed.

But this is the first time I was confessed in such a straight way.

Moreover, by two at the same time.

It is true that I am the reincarnation of the Dark God Entropy and am a God at my core. As a God, I have transcended all emotions and wouldn't waver over love.

But right now, the vessel I have this God soul in is without doubt human.

As long as I am a human, have a flesh vessel, have a body, I can't stay estranged from its instincts and desires.

I want to live, I don't want to die, I am hungry, it is cold, it is hot, I am sleepy, I want to have sex, I want to love, I want to be loved, I want to make the person I love happy, I want a place to be, I want a family, I don't want to be lonely, I want to love someone, love, love, love!

...Are the kind of emotions that come from my heart, but it also manifests in my body as well.

That's why, even if it's not a problem for the Dark God Entropy, it is a big problem for the human Kuromiya Haine.

And at this very moment!!

"Now, Haine-san." (Karen)

"Who are you going to choose as your girlfriend?" (Yorishiro)

The two beauties were persistently closing in like wild animals going after their prey.

Do I have to choose from one of them right now?

That in itself is incredibly heavy for me, or more like, it would be incredibly painful for the person that wasn't chosen.

After thinking it thoroughly, I finally prostrated.

"Uhm, sorry. Is it really necessary to bring out an answer right now?" (Haine)

Is what I plead with a tear in my eye.

That figure of mine must have looked pretty shameful. The intensity of those two disappeared.

"Geez, Haine-san, there's no need to say that with those eyes." (Karen)

"Looks like we pressed for an answer way too hastily. This is something important. It would be better to take the time to bring out an answer. Is that okay, Karen-san?" (Yorishiro)

"Of course, Yorishiro-sama. Let's compete fair and square!" (Karen)

Is what she says as the two heroines exchange a firm handshake.

The two are good girls at heart, so this situation that is normally a muddy path

has been smoothly sheathed back.

At any rate, can this be considered as...being saved?

“But there’s one thing I want to say to Haine-san.” (Yorishiro)

“Really?!” (Haine)

Is what I thought, but Yorishiro once again pursues.

What is it this time?

“It is valid to choose both.” (Yorishiro)

“”Eeeeeeeh?!!”

This shocked both Karen-san and I.

Valid to choose both? What’s the meaning of this?

“In other words, this is what I mean.” (Yorishiro)

Yorishiro joyfully walks to a bookshelf that was at the side.

Ah right, this is a library.

Yorishiro chose one book from the bookshelf and takes it out. The title of that book got the attention of Karen-san.

“...Isn’t that...the scriptures of our Light Church?” (Karen)

“Scriptures?” (Haine)

“It is a book that has the stories of the Light Goddess Inflation that the Light Church worships, history of the early days of the church, precepts that the believers of the Light Church have to abide to, and precepts that the previous Founder-samas preached about. For us, the scriptures of the Light Church are the most sacred of books. In Apollon City, there will always be one book in each family.” (Karen)

“Eh? I don’t have one though?” (Haine)

I just recently entered the church after all.

Ignoring what we were talking about, Yorishiro turns the pages of this so called scripture.

I already knew this, but she really is a person that goes at her own pace.

“...Karen-san, can you recite by memory the precepts of the church?”
(Yorishiro)

“Eh?! U-Uhm...” (Karen)

Karen-san was flustered for a while, and in time, she hung her head down.

“Sorry, I can’t!” (Karen)

“It is fine. Remembering all of the scriptures of Light, there’s not a single one in the current higher-ups of the church who can do it..... And so, the important part is here.” (Yorishiro)

“Eh?” “Eh?”

We concentrated on the part of the scriptures Yorishiro pointed at.

It was a page that was written as the precept clauses, and shows the commandments and rules that the Light Church believers have to abide to.

At that place, this is what was written.

[

The person that will become the husband of the Founder will be allowed polygamy.

]

“Ooooi!!!”

There’s no way I wouldn’t retort to this.

“...Hey, this passage here, you were the one who included it in the scriptures, right? You were the one who abused your authority, right?” (Haine)

“Oh my, Haine-san. Even if I am the Founder, there’s no way I would be able to readily change the scriptures that can be considered the very roots of the church-desu wa.” (Yorishiro)

“Eh? Then...” (Haine)

When I was in the middle of my confusion, Yorishiro whispered this to me.

(...When the church was established, I ordered them through an oracle to

include it.) (Yorishiro)

“So it really was you!!” (Haine)

It wasn't an abuse of authority as a Founder, but as a God!

What an unbelievable God!

...Hm? Wait. In that case, instead of Yorishiro, it is more like, the Light Goddess Inflation had already predicted something like this would happen from that far back in the past...

“I have already predicted what you would do'..... Those words you said to me before, I will throw them right back at you-desu wa.” (Yorishiro)

“Ooow?!” (Haine)

Are you telling me she predicted I would reincarnate as a human after my release since several centuries back and was doing the preparations for it?

In order to enjoy her human live with me as much as she could?

“And so, if we go by this precept, it is possible to love both Karen-san and I at the same time.” (Yorishiro)

“Both...at the same time...” (Karen)

Karen-san repeats those words entranced.

“How about it, Karen-san? Of course, if you want to monopolize Haine-san, I will have no choice but to fight with you fair and square though...” (Yorishiro)

“Yorishiro-sama!” (Karen)

Karen-san tightly held both hands of Yorishiro.

“Our Founder!” (Karen)

Karen-san fell...

Chapter 67: The reason of their encounter

And that's how the alliance between the Light Church's Founder and the light hero was formed.

I don't even know if it's fine anymore to call these two holy women.

"So she says! Haine-san!" (Karen)

Is what the hero that had been convinced by the Founder just a few moments ago said as she suddenly approached me.

"With this, everyone can be happy! Yorishiro-sama and I don't have to get rejected by Haine-san! There's nothing as great as this!" (Karen)

Ah, right.

Karen-san has the trait of not being concerned about the rules of society, and is more about wishing for the happiness of everyone, that's why she became a hero -to protect the people.

Her basic stance as a hero is that when she is given a choice like: 'sacrifice someone to save the world', she would go: 'I will save both!'.

This time also falls into that case...probably.

"Karen-san, I am looking forward to working with you-desu wa." (Yorishiro)

"Yes! Let's pair our strengths to protect the Church and the people!" (Karen)

Founder and Hero; the leader of the Church and the face of it. In other words, it is like the position of a captain and the ace, which means both of them are connected by a strong bond, but...of all things, the catalyst of it had to be...!

"Well then, Karen-san, do you want to join in on our date?" (Yorishiro)

"Eh? Is that okay? Even though you finally have the chance to be alone with Haine-san?" (Karen)

"As women that love Haine-san, trying to get ahead would be foul play. No matter the time and place, in sickness and in health, let's have Haine-san love us together." (Yorishiro)

“You have my respect, Yorishiro-sama! Ah, but I have some business to do...”
(Karen)

“If it is okay, let us accompany you in that. It is okay to do that as a date, right?” (Yorishiro)

“You are kindness itself, Yorishiro-sama! It would help me a lot. To tell you the truth, I had something to consult with Yorishiro-sama and Haine-san!” (Karen)

The two women, that are completely in sync, had left me behind and were advancing at their own pace.

I was left there.

It felt as if a tornado had just passed. Noisy and boisterous.

Even though this is a library, even though this is the perfect spot for silence, we ended up making quite the noise.

When I look at the surroundings, just as I thought, the gazes of the people here and the librarian-san were directed at me.

Having their attention but still maintaining silence is painful in itself.

“...Uhm, I am truly sorry for the noise.” (Haine)

I apologize and lower my head.

But even without saying anything, the atmosphere in this place was clearly returning to me in words:

‘Guilty or Not Guilty?’

‘...GUILTY!’

“I am truly sorry for the disturbance!” (Haine)

‘That’s not the thing you should be apologizing for.’

Is what the atmosphere was telling me.

And so, I chased after the two as if running away and join up with them.

It looks like Karen-san really did have something to do.

“You don’t mind right, Haine-san?” (Yorishiro)

“Well, I don’t...” (Haine)

I gave my answer, but in this situation, I had no other choice for an answer anyways.

Well, even if we continued the date as it is, we have gone through all the date spots that Frost recommended, and even with that, it is still too soon to return, so we were about to run out of things to do anyways.

Let’s think of it as ‘just in time’.

“Karen-san, you came to the library because you had business there?”
(Yorishiro)

“Of course. I have been going there lately, you know. There’s something I wanted to investigate after all. Ah, but uhm...!” (Karen)

“?”

Laying down the conversation, Karen-san begins to fidget.

“.....Don’t ignore what happened before, okay?” (Karen)

““What happened before’?” (Haine)

“The talk about me...loving Haine-san! I don’t mind you giving me an answer later, but leaving the confession itself as if it never happened would be incredibly troubling for me. I thoroughly used the female courage I normally don’t use after all!” (Karen)

She pinned it down!

It is true that it was pushed by the alliance between these two and the confession was washed away, but it was incredibly important for her.

But there’s a place for those kind of things, Karen-san.

In this incredibly public space that is the library, there’s quite the amount of onlookers.

If it wasn’t for that, I would have lost to the passion of Karen-san and would have hugged her right then and there, but with Yorishiro there as well, more the reason why I couldn’t.

Karen-san completely missed the concept of time and place, but she was still able to manage a confession in those circumstances.

I don't know if this is the courage she has as a hero, or the thing she called the female courage.

"At any rate, until I hear an answer from Haine-san, I will be telling you 'I love you' everyday." (Karen)

"That's great. I will do that too." (Yorishiro)

Even Yorishiro jumped on the wagon.

Please spare me.

"Well, returning to the topic, my objective in coming to the library. I wanted to hear the opinion of Yorishiro-sama and Haine-san, so this is truly good timing." (Karen)

Yorishiro and I?

Just what does Karen-san want to ask?

"I was currently investigating about the Dark God Entropy." (Karen)

Chapter 68: The God hidden in the books

“Dark God Entropy...” (Haine)

Hearing that name, I was perplexed.

Because that God is the soul that’s inside of me after all.

“That’s right. Since the time Yorishiro-sama told me about that God, I tried investigating about a lot of things on my own. This library was the best source of information I had.” (Karen)

“There’s no other library as big as this no matter what part in this world you look at after all. If it’s to investigate something, this is certainly a great place to do it.” (Yorishiro)

Yorishiro adds.

In the Radona mountainous district where we had fought the fire cow Phalaris, I revealed for the first time my battle style with Dark Matter, and the questioning that came after was unavoidable.

Yorishiro appeared in good timing and revealed the existence of the sixth God of Creation, the Dark God Entropy.

In this world, aside from the Earth, Wind, Fire, Water, and Light element, there’s also the dark element that composes this world as well, and there are really rare times when the dark element is thick inside humans.

With that ‘setting’, we were able to convince Karen-san and Mirack about my Dark Matter.

The reality is different though. Since the soul inside of me is the Dark God Entropy himself after all.

“I have been bothered by it all this time. We have been worshipping the Gods of Creation for several centuries, and yet, I was now told that there’s actually not only five but six. Don’t you think this is an incredible revelation, Haine-san?” (Karen)

“Yeah...” (Haine)

It is hard for me to understand how she feels since I knew from the very beginning...

“But if that’s true, why is the Dark God not known like the other Gods? Why is he not being worshipped by anyone? The questions just keep popping up!”
(Karen)

“And that’s why you were coming to the library, to investigate?” (Haine)

“Yes, and also...!” (Karen)

Karen-san fidgets for a moment, and then, as if having resolved herself, she says,

“It is the God that’s connected with the person I love, so I got even more interested in it...” (Karen)

Uwa.

Now that Karen-san has confessed once, she continuously keeps attacking without hesitation.

“I understand that feeling, Karen-san. You want to learn all about the person you love after all.” (Yorishiro)

“That’s right, Yorishiro-sama! And so, the information about this Dark God was brought to light by Yorishiro-sama, so I thought that maybe you knew more.” (Karen)

“Sorry.” (Yorishiro)

Yorishiro says this looking truly sorry.

“I don’t know more than what the Light Goddess-sama had enlightened me with her oracle.” (Yorishiro)

And so the Light Goddess herself says...

Yorishiro and I are keeping it a secret that we are the reincarnation of Gods.

It is obvious that we will be seen as megalomaniacs, and even if by some chance they were to believe us, it would only needlessly create disturbance in the world, and there’s absolutely no good points about it.

In the first place, I want to enjoy this world not as a God but as a human.

Yorishiro probably thinks the same way.

That's why, the God part inside of me is a secret that's okay not being known.

"The oracle of the Light Goddess-sama must have been to let me know about the approach of the special existence that is Haine-san. She didn't tell me much." (Yorishiro)

And I am impressed at how easily Yorishiro can lie. It is probably a necessary skill to hide her true nature as a God though.

It is not the type that brings down people, so let's consider it as white lie.

"The Gods wish for the people to think by themselves. That's why, no matter what it is, they will only reveal a small part of it. Unveiling everything is the role of the people themselves." (Yorishiro)

"I see... That's true. The things you wish for have to be grasped with your own hands!" (Karen)

And Karen-san is a honest and good girl.

"And so, I have researched on my own. I dug out as many old books from this library as possible, and read them from beginning to end. And then, when I found information that might be related to Entropy-sama, I would transcribe it, and this is what I got!" (Karen)

Don!! is the sound that the notebook makes when it hits the table.

It is incredibly worn out.

"...Uhm, Karen-san, you learned about Entropy pretty recently, right?" (Haine)

Then, her investigation should have begun pretty recently, and yet, did she investigate so much that it ended up with her notebook getting this worn out?

"Well, even if I say that, there hasn't been a single place that had a clear mention of Entropy-sama though. As expected of a hidden God that its existence has not been known at all until this present day. But..." (Karen)

Karen-san turns the front cover of the notebook.

At the first page, there's cute writing that's most likely from Karen-san herself.

“First, there was darkness; in there, Inflation creates light; Quasar filled the sky with air; next, Mantle creates earth; Coacervate filled the earth’s space with water; and at last, Nova melded it all into one with fire; and that’s how the world was created.” (Karen)

“That’s one passage of the Genesis.” (Haine)

“That’s right. But this part about ‘first, there was darkness’, isn’t it strange? There’s light, wind, earth, water, and wind; everything that the Gods made was clearly written there, and yet, darkness was empty right from the beginning. I didn’t find it strange before, but now that I read it, I do feel something’s off.” (Karen)

“...That’s true...” (Haine)

“This passage was probably rewritten, and before it was rewritten, this is what was there: ‘First, Entropy created darkness’.” (Karen)

Well, that’s actually how it is.

“There were also other descriptions that were of interest. In the especially old books of this library, there’s phrases like these appearing. ‘Two poles, four base elements’.” (Karen)

“Must be referring to the six Gods.” (Haine)

“That’s right! As expected of Haine-san!” (Karen)

Oops, should I have waited a bit more to give out that opinion?

“Based on the context throughout the book, these words should certainly be referring to the Gods of Creation, but there’s five Gods of Creation, and yet, it is written ‘two poles, four base elements’, in that case, 2 plus 4 makes 6. The numbers don’t match. But, if we count Entropy-sama in the math, it makes sense.” (Karen)

Karen-san really investigated well.

In the six Gods of Creation, there were clear categories: the light and dark poles; and the earth, fire, water, and wind base elements. These two categories had a strong difference in high and low, but I who was one of the poles was defeated and sealed, so it became hazy.

At any rate, I am impressed that Karen-san was able to investigate this much.

I was sealed at the Genesis of the world, so it is natural that no one knows about me from the very beginning.

That's why, rather than saying the books have been rewritten, it is more like, it shouldn't even exist to begin with. There's no way there would be details of the Dark God written anywhere.

The most that can be achieved is to catch the scent of my possible existence.

"And so, I have one big reveal left for the last part." (Karen)

"Huh?" (Haine)

"There's apparently people that worshipped the Dark God Entropy in the past." (Karen)

"Eeeh?!"

There's no way that's possible!

"I found a book that points out the place where they might have been living in. And its name is: The Dark Underworld Country." (Karen)

Chapter 69: Metropolis of Darkness

What is the meaning of this?!

There were humans that worshipped me, the Dark God Entropy?!

I didn't know about any of this. The person himself not knowing that he was being worshipped...is that even possible?

"Karen-san, please speak about this in more detail." (Yorishiro)

Being urged by Yorishiro, Karen-san continues.

"The Dark Underworld country seems to be the city that the people, who worship the Dark God Entropy, build. It wasn't mentioned in any of the history or geography textbooks, but there was a poetry anthology of the long past that had mentioned this name." (Karen)

Karen-san turns the pages of the notebook and a page filled with what's most definitely the writing of her was shown to us.

Summarizing that poem, the evil people that worshipped the Dark God had been destroyed together with their city.

The poem described it as 'the victory of justice and the defeat of evil', and sung it highly, but it could be described as being childishly written. It was on the level that I would understand why it would be buried at the very corners of the library.

"A poem huh. Compared to a book, this has a low level of credibility." (Haine)

"That's true. As long as there's not something backing it, there's the possibility that this author wrote it based on its own fantasy. Also, I am a bit scared of this poem." (Karen)

"Scared?" (Haine)

"This poem describes the Dark God as some sort of evil being that taints humans. If Entropy-sama really is such a bad God...I really wouldn't like it." (Karen)

Karen-san was making a truly sad face.

It was hard for me to say anything. As the person himself, I can't say if Entropy is truly good or evil. And I don't remember I did anything for this Dark land that was mentioned by this author.

There's no way I would have been able to do anything, since I was sealed in that period of time.

In the text of the poem, the only thing that's stated clearly is the name of the land, Underworld Country. I can't see a single part that mentions the name of the Dark God Entropy.

'Ruler of Darkness', 'the Avatar of Wickedness'; those were the only vague mentions there.

As expected, this is the portrayal of the author's fantasy that matched with me by coincidence. It would be the most natural to accept this as just that, a coincidence...

"Then, let's go confirm it."

...Is the conclusion I reached to, but there was one person who said something outrageous.

"Yorishiro?" "Yorishiro-sama?!"

I was wondering why she had been silent, but she actually came and threw in an explosive statement again.

"Confirm it, where?!" (Karen)

"Of course, at the Dark Underworld country. The many questions you have will most likely have an answer when you go there." (Yorishiro)

"But Yorishiro-sama...!" (Karen)

I stand on Karen-san's side in this.

"The Underworld country is a mysterious city that we don't even know if it existed or not! Even if it actually does, it would be just like the poem has written it to be, destroyed and in ruins already. In the first place, we don't know where it is! Even if we tried to look for it, there's no clues—" (Karen)

"If it's about that, there's no need to worry." (Yorishiro)

Yorishiro takes out something from her pocket. A small magnetic needle... something like a compass.

“This is one of the secret treasures that have been passed down to the Founders of the Light Church, the ‘Needle of Guidance’.” (Yorishiro)

“‘Needle of Guidance’?!” (Karen)

“This needle is made from the same material as the holy sword Saint-George that was granted to you, Karen-san. If you pour light divine power into it with the image of what you are looking for in your mind, it will point at a certain direction.” (Yorishiro)

“Incredible! Then, if we pour divine power into this needle and imagine the Underworld country...!!” (Karen)

It will point at the direction the Underworld country is.

It sounds like an incredibly convenient item. Way too convenient.

“But, if what you are looking for is way too far, or your image is way too vague, it won’t point well at your destination. In order to search for it better, you would need to pour even more light divine power. To search for a place that you don’t know where in the whole world it is and have never seen before, Karen-san, even if you place all your divine power into it, it still wouldn’t be enough.” (Yorishiro)

“Ah...”

Reality isn’t that kind.

The path that had opened was immediately closed, and the face of Karen-san clouds.

“That’s why I will be going as well.” (Yorishiro)

“Yorishiro-sama?!” (Karen)

“If we pair your light divine power with mine, we would have enough to cover the whole world. Karen-san, in exchange of this sacred treasure and my divine power, in your search for the Dark Underworld country, can I also accompany you?” (Yorishiro)

“Of course! Thank you very much! Yorishiro-sama, how kind you are!” (Karen)

“Ufufu, we are already comrades in love, aren’t we. It is a given to help each other.” (Yorishiro)

The self-proclaimed comrades in love are holding hands and swinging them up and down

No, wait. Doesn’t that mean the hero and the Founder would be absent from the Light Church?

“Looks like you are uneasy about something, Haine-san.” (Yorishiro)

“Don’t read my mind.” (Haine)

“It is okay. For the sake of this kind of times, I work hard everyday in order to maintain the remaining work to zero. So, in my absence, I will just have the Cardinal work as if his life is at stake.” (Yorishiro)

“Please don’t sacrifice the life force of someone else!” (Haine)

“Those people don’t usually work anyways, so this serves just fine.”
(Yorishiro)

A black Yorishiro came out.

“I am also fine. Just like the time when we went to Hydra Ville, as long as I have the flying machine, I can handle any situation in a timely manner! Okay, with this, things have been decided. Let’s go, Haine-san!” (Karen)

“Eh?” (Haine)

“Eh?” (Karen)

I look at Karen-san with a dumbfounded expression, and Karen-san looks back at me with a puzzled expression.

.....Well, yeah...I knew this would happen.

I have to go together with them. I am the hero’s assistant after all.

Also, as the reincarnation of the Dark God, this matter is suspicious. I don’t remember being worshipped, and yet, there’s supposedly a city of Dark God worshippers. If there really is a place like that, I want to properly confirm its identity.

And more importantly, I can't leave these two, who have surpassed their 'Haine-san love parameter', alone!

Chapter 70: To the desert

In the past, there was a mysterious city that worshipped the Dark God, the Underworld Country.

In order to go on a journey to search for this place, there was the need of around 1 week of preparation.

Most importantly, the Founder Yorishiro had to put in order a lot of tasks in order to take a leave from the Light capital, so there was the need for time to finish those.

The hero Karen-san also had those kind of duties, and while finishing them all, a whole week passed in the blink of an eye.

By the way, I thought the 'Karen-san love love' girl -also known as the fire hero, Mirack-would be desperate in trying to let her accompany us, but she went against my expectations and didn't participate.

The reason is because she has to concentrate on the security of Muspelheim.

Looks like her constant visits to Karen-san have finally angered the Fire Church.

To show that she has reflected on this, it seems she won't be able to visit Karen-san for a while.

The water hero Celestis is endeavouring in both her duties as a hero and an idol in Hydra Ville.

In that case, the members this time will only be us three...

* * *

"I like you, Haine-san."

"I love you-desu wa, Haine-san."

"Are you two seriously going to do this everyday?!"

In the day of our departure, I was immediately greeted with a double punch that was about to knock me out.

The light hero, Karen-san, and the Light Church Founder, Yorishiro.

In the several days after the event where the two confessed their love, their attacks have been aggressive. It was on a level that I felt I was being completely crushed flat.

Even in the middle of our duties at the Light Church, they would stick their bodies to me and whisper their love. For the body of a growing man, this was incredibly bad for my health.

“We can finally go, to our searching tour of the Dark Underworld Country!”
(Karen)

“To think I would be able to have a journey with this lineup, it is like a honeymoon-desu wa.” (Yorishiro)

Is a honeymoon something that’s supposed to be done with three people?

When I am involved, these two become a pair that are just wishing to be retorted.

Weird rumors have already been spreading inside the church, and sadly, most of them are true... And in order to have those rumors cool down, this journey might be useful to make them ‘disappear’ from there.

.....

I tried thinking about it for a bit but, as I thought, it won’t work. I can easily imagine that our absence will only invite speculation and the stories will get even more inflated.

“And so, Karen-san, are the preparations on your side done?” (Yorishiro)

“Of course, Founder! Please look!” (Karen)

Saying this, what Karen-san pointed at with a *bang!* was the flying machine that I am already familiar with.

It is a one-man ride that flies at high speeds powered with Ethereal energy, and thanks to this little one, the range of things the hero Karen-san can do have increased drastically.

It is a great machine that’s already on the level that it should be indispensable

for a hero, but the one I am seeing today is a bit different from the one I am used to.

“I requested this from the manufacturers in the Flaptor company and had them remodel it in several areas. It has been painted with a special heat-resistant paint and closed up as many of the opened areas in the machine as possible to increase the airtight properties of it. It is in order to avoid sand from entering.” (Karen)

“Sand?” (Haine)

“That’s right. The destination this time seems like it will be a lot crueller than the places we have been until now, so we can’t lack in preparations.” (Karen)

Yeah, our journey this time is to search for the Underworld country, but the place we are heading to search in has already been established.

We have already poured light divine power to the ‘Needle of Guidance’ in order to have it point at our wished destination.

And then, after matching the direction with the map, we inferred the location we would arrive at.

A desert.

Speaking of it in more detail, it is a big desert that is at the territory of the Earth capital, Ishtar Blaze. The people call it the ‘Nameless Desert’.

It is all sand without a single blade of grass growing, and it is said that everyone that has gone in there has died. And in reality, there have been reports of several people always ending up stranded there. It is a pretty dangerous place.

That’s why, there’s the need to be completely prepared.

...Well, in normal circumstances, it would be best to just not go there though.

“But it is exactly because it is such a dangerous place that people don’t get close to it, and it wouldn’t be strange if there were a city that people have not been able to discover there for several centuries. It might become the discovery of the century!” (Karen)

“Ufufu, it tingles your sense of adventure-desu wa ne.” (Yorishiro)

Why are these two holy women so hyped up?

“But I am still worried. Having you girls go to such a dangerous place is just...”
(Haine)

“Please don’t look down on me, Haine-san. I am a hero. I have already learned the survival skills in order to fight against monsters in any kind of extreme situations.” (Karen)

After Karen-san, Yorishiro also speaks.

“What’s needed when stepping into an unknown land is careful preparation. As long as there’s that, there’s no need to fear more than necessary. Believe that the wisdom of humans can conquer nature.” (Yorishiro)

And so says the God...

In your case, it only means that you can just release your power as a Goddess and things will resolve somehow.

Well, that’s the same for me though.

In that sense, there’s most likely no need to worry?

“Well then, let’s go, Yorishiro-sama!” (Karen)

“Right, Karen-san. Finally, what we have been waiting for!” (Yorishiro)

“Our journey of love with Haine-san!” (Karen)

“An incognito trip where love and desire swirls!” (Yorishiro)

As I thought, maybe we should not go.

I am beginning to wonder what’s their actual objective.

Chapter 71: At the Oasis

From the places we have gone to, this 'Nameless Desert' is the one who is the most harshest of them all.

It truly was sand from as far as you can see. There's nothing that serves as a landmark, so the sense of direction gets disarrayed, and the sand is reflecting the sunlight making it quite hot.

It is exactly because of the flying machine that we were able to reach all the way here and allowed us to move fast even in a place like this, but if that wasn't the case, we would have it quite rough.

"Haine-san, Haine-san!" (Karen)

Karen-san calls to me as she drives through the desert with her flying machine.

"Yorishiro-sama is in a dire state!" (Karen)

There was one girl that was having it hard.

When I look , the person that is clinging onto the back of Karen-san at the rear seat of the flying machine, Yorishiro, was having her life force shaved off by the heat and the sunlight's radiance.

She had her tongue out and going *huff huff* like a summertime dog.

"Ah good grief. It is because you are normally at the Grand Church and rarely go out, and now you have suddenly gone to a rough place like this..." (Haine)

At this rate, the life force of Yorishiro will run out...

This is problematic. Even if we want to let her rest, there's only sand all around us with no place to take it easy.

"....."

Yorishiro stayed silent with only her compass in hand. The needle was going in circles like crazy, and then, points at a set direction.

".....Oasis." (Yorishiro)

“Eh?”

Looks like she doesn't have anymore strength to say anything more.

What she has in her hands is the 'Needle of Guidance' that can point at the things you search for if you pour light divine power in it.

This thing that we have been using in order to search for the Underworld country has now changed its target to an oasis. In other words, a water source inside the desert.

What a crafty woman. And also, what a convenient item.

“Haine-san, let's head to the oasis. At this rate, Yorishiro-sama will dry up.”
(Karen)

“Yeah. Having the Light Founder dying from heatstroke would not be funny.”
(Haine)

And so, Karen-san and I turn our flying machines to the oasis and drive our way there.

By the way, there's currently two flying machines here; the one that Karen-san and Yorishiro are riding, and the one I am riding.

In this journey, I managed to ride on my own personal flying machine!

When we were about to depart for this journey, Yorishiro prepared this with her own pocket money.

She nonchalantly said: 'I am giving this to you', but I refused.

After all, when I was going to buy this flying machine myself, I learned that it was being sold at a terrifying price.

Since I become the hero's assistant, I now have quite a decent wage, but I would have to throw a whole half a year worth of my pay in order to afford one.

Moreover, the cheapest one.

With less than half of that price, I would be able to buy a pretty decent house at Apollon City.

I was thinking of sending part of my pay to my parents at the village, so it made the price even more shocking.

Even if I am told nonchalantly by her that she would be ‘giving’ me the luxury I was unable to buy, I would be way too scared of what would happen after receiving it.

And so, right now, I am riding this only as a borrowed article from the Light Church, and only using it on official business.

I am suddenly already using it for private business, but if I think of it as using it to act as the bodyguard of the hero and the Founder, it can’t be considered 100% private business! ...Probably.

If the Underworld country really does exist, it would be a world shaking discovery, so thinking of it in that way, it can’t be called private business! ... Probably.

And in that way, as I was making excuses for myself, we found an area of green right in the middle of the desert.

There really was an oasis here.

* * *

Water welled up in the desert, and with that as a source, green grew thickly; an oasis, what a mysterious place.

With the vaporization of the water and the shadows that the vegetation creates, this place is a lot more fresh.

We took a break of around 1 hour there and Yorishiro finally regained her vitality.

“Aah, I am back~~! The blessing of nature is the best~~!” (Yorishiro)

In the end, humans can’t control nature.

“But the one that was saved was not only Yorishiro-sama. I was having it rough as well after all.” (Karen)

Karen-san says this as she wipes her face covered in sweat.

True, that applies to me as well.

We are tougher as fighters compared to Yorishiro, but that doesn’t mean we are completely fine in a harsh environment.

There's plenty chance that we would get heat stroke as well if we were to wander too long in the sunlight of the desert.

"As I thought, it is way too reckless to move around the desert in the morning. Let's rest in this oasis and wait for night to come." (Haine)

Is what I say and...

"When the sun goes down and the temperature lowers, we will resume the search for the Underworld country, right? Then, there's something I would like to do now that we are here." (Karen)

What? Karen-san suddenly began fidgeting.

"Bath." (Karen)

"I understand that feeling." (Yorishiro)

Yorishiro who was groggy jumped at that proposal.

"It is so hot and my whole body is covered in sweat, and even my underwear is soaking wet. On top of that, there's sand inside my clothes, and if I don't wash it, I will feel completely uncomfortable." (Karen)

"And so, there's an oasis here in good timing, and a spring...But you see, if we are going to take a bath, we would need to take off our clothes, and get naked, right?" (Yorishiro)

Hearing until that point, I understood what they wanted to say. It is true that they would be worried about the gaze of a man.

"Haine-san." (Karen)

"Yes?" (Haine)

"Please peek, okay?" (Karen)

"Understood—eh?!" (Haine)

I almost agreed.

"Wait, Karen-san. Isn't that the part where you say 'please don't peek'?" (Haine)

"In normal cases, yeah. But I love Haine-san. That's why, it would trouble me

if you don't peek." (Karen)

Since the time she confessed, her aggressiveness has been escalating!

"I understand that feeling, Karen-san. They would think: 'is that gentleman seeing me as a woman?', this is a life-or-death problem for a lady. And that's how it is Haine-san, I will be taking a bath as well, so don't hesitate to peek."
(Yorishiro)

"I will hesitate!" (Haine)

I am the human, Kuromiya Haine. And the boundary that separates humans from animals is reasoning. That's why, I value reason. No matter the time and place.

"Are you not going to peek no matter what?" (Yorishiro)

"I-I won't! There's a code of conduct even in intimate relationships after all!"
(Haine)

I assert this.

I hope that these two will give up with this.

"Can't be helped-desu wa, Karen-san. Haine-san is not the cowardly type that would hide and peek on someone after all." (Yorishiro)

"That's right, Yorishiro-sama. Haine-san is not the kind of coward who would hide and do things sneakily. In other words, we bath together unreservedly!"
(Karen)

"Oooi!!" (Haine)

Why is it getting deeper?!

"Uhm, Haine-san! I will wring out all of my courage to accompany you, so please!" (Karen)

"There's no need for that courage! Please use that courage to fight against monsters!" (Haine)

When I tried to convince Karen-san, Yorishiro joins in.

"Haine-san, the courage of a hero and the courage of a woman are two different things. And to prove that, see? My legs are shaking. But, in order to

become the woman of Haine-san officially, I will win against my fear!”
(Yorishiro)

“Win against your fear for the sake of guiding your believers!” (Haine)

Convincing these two utilized more energy than when we were wandering in the desert.

Chapter 72: Beautiful spring

“Ara, Karen-san, your skin is truly white. Moreover, it is so clear, it looks like polished white porcelain.” (Yorishiro)

“Oh come on, Yorishiro-sama, please don’t look so intently at my naked body. Yorishiro-sama, you yourself have a pretty well-developed body and...uhm...it is incredibly big.” (Karen)

They really went to take a bath.

The sounds of water splashing and the laughs that were like the chirping of birds.

All of those were entering my ears and stimulating the male part of Kuromiya Haine. And at the same time, the human part of Kuromiya Haine was cautioning: ‘this is not the time yet, don’t hurry things’.

A fierce struggle between reason and desire.

Of course, this is what those girls were aiming for.

“Eek! Yorishiro-sama, please don’t poke at weird places!” (Karen)

“Isn’t it fine? My body and your body are the personal feast of Haine-san. Sampling each other’s body will help in understanding what needs to be corrected-desu wa.” (Yorishiro)

“Eh? Then, is it okay for me to poke Yorishiro-sama as well?” (Karen)

“Of course. Go ahead and do it anywhere you want.” (Yorishiro)

Aaaaaaahhh!!!

That was the scream of my instincts.

They are saying those things while knowing. Purposely having me hear it, they are aiming to destroy my sense of reason with their ‘kya kya fufu’.

It is true that I said I won’t peek, and I also said I won’t bathe with them.

If I disappear from their view, the doubts that I might be peeking wouldn’t go away, so I went out of my way and turned my back at an area close to the

spring and am currently sitting firmly there.

Because I have my back turned I can't see, but I can clearly hear the sounds of the water and their lovely voices.

They know. If they continuously make me hear those voices, they can crack my reason and I would turn into an animal.

The tag team of these two is way too scary.

Both of them are extreme in their behavior, but whether it is Karen-san or Yorishiro, when they are on their own, they are girls that have a bit more reservation than this.

There's also the eyes of the surroundings and they are intelligent girls to begin with, so they know that if they lose their sense of shame, it would be terrible.

But the brake that they place when they are on their own suddenly gets destroyed when there's the two of them.

When one takes one step, the other will go: 'ah, so it's okay to go that far', and does one step further than that. And then, the other side, seeing this, will go: 'ah, so it's okay to go that far', and it will be a repeat of that as they dig themselves into a deeper hole.

By the time they notice, they are already at a far line that they shouldn't have crossed.

Those are the kind of mistakes you end up regretting later.

Karen-san and Yorishiro; the two are actually quite similar, and that's exactly why they are a dangerous type to mix together.

Being in between these two, the three of us are alone at an oasis in the middle of the desert that's basically a deserted island.

Encountering someone here is close to zero. Because of various reasons, I have been unable to move for almost half of the day.

What's with this impasse that had no opening? There's no escape!

If this seduction continues until sunset, even I wouldn't be able to protect my

steel resolve!

What am I to do, Haine?!

What should I do about the beast inside of me?!

* * *

I managed to endure it.

Because the two holy women had tired themselves out after finishing their bath.

“Ku...ku...ku.....”

“Ufufu, she is sleeping soundly.” (Yorishiro)

Karen-san is making sleeping sounds, and Yorishiro, who had placed Karen-san’s head on her lap, was looking at her happily.

“She must have gotten tired after frolicking too much. This morning, she had a face that said she hadn’t slept at all because of her excitement. The pleasantness of the bath must have sooth her into sleep.” (Yorishiro)

“Ah, I’m saved~. That was close.” (Haine)

Thanks to Karen-san being asleep, the offensive has stopped.

If it continued just like that, my reason would have definitely crumbled, and a situation that can’t be shown to children would have happened.

“...Karen-san has truly become a lively girl. Since meeting with Haine-san, she has changed to a point that you wouldn’t be able to recognize her.” (Yorishiro)

“Eh? Really?” (Haine)

“That’s right. Her core as a zealous person has not changed, but in her inauguration as a hero, that zealousness was showing openly. By meeting Haine-san, she has become able to play around quite a lot.” (Yorishiro)

“Well, sorry for being an evil man that corrupts the hero.” (Haine)

“It is the contrary. The Karen-san before meeting you was, how to say it, overeager, or more like, stiffened up; at any rate, she didn’t have any flexibility. Her intentions were good, but she was sacrificing herself for that sake. Haine-

san, you were the one who allowed her to loosen that unnecessary strength.”
(Yorishiro)

“Is that a good thing?” (Haine)

“It is. As an assistant of the hero, you are properly caring for the mental health of the hero. As a Founder, I praise you.” (Yorishiro)

Yorishiro dresses it up as a joke.

Now that I think about it, the Karen-san I met at my village gave me an impression that her shoulders and elbows were more stuck to the front.

I thought that was gone because she simply got more familiar with me, but I see, she was the one who changed.

“For a long time, I have thought I could be friends with her.” (Yorishiro)

Yorishiro continues looking at the sleeping face of Karen-san.

“For a long time, I have thought that she is similar to me. She fell in love with the same person as me, so my intuition was spot on. Thanks to that, we have completely become good friends. But...” (Yorishiro)

“Hm?”

“Haine-san will...definitely choose Karen-san.” (Yorishiro)

Yorishiro said something unexpected.

In other words, that means Yorishiro is saying I will choose Karen-san as my girlfriend?

“What’s wrong so suddenly? Saying something that’s not like you.” (Haine)

“No well...you and I have a past after all. Even if we are inside human vessels now, you wouldn’t marry a woman that sealed you before, right?” (Yorishiro)

In the battle of Gods 1,600 years ago, in the battle where I was the Dark God Entropy and Yorishiro was the Light Goddess Inflation, I was defeated by her, and was sealed for a long time.

“What, you think I am holding a grudge on you?” (Haine)

“Eh?”

“Just how long do you think that has been? 1,600 years. That’s way too far in the past. It is even hard to not forget the grudges I had just a day before. It would be way too tiring to hold a grudge that’s more than 1 year old.” (Haine)

“But... the other ones...” (Yorishiro)

“The reason why I beat up Nova and Coacervate was because those guys pissed me off in the present. If they are pieces of shit like in the past, even the grudges of the past would resurface, right?” (Haine)

But Yorishiro is different.

The Light Goddess Inflation in front of me is different.

“At the very least, I am fond of the Light Goddess Inflation as an equal God. We are comrades that cooperated to create the world. There’s no way I would hate you.” (Haine)

“Haine... Haine-san!!” (Yorishiro)

“But that’s only as the Dark God Entropy towards the Light Goddess Inflation. The human Haine towards Yorishiro...that would have to start from zero first—Uoo?!!” (Haine)

I looked at my side and get surprised.

Yorishiro is crying. Silently. But there’s an amount of tears that was enough to create strings flowing from both of her eyes.

“What’s wrong?! There’s no need to cry, right?” (Haine)

“Haine-san is at fault for saying something that would make me cry. I felt like the burden I had been shouldering for 1,600 years had fallen off.” (Yorishiro)

And so that’s why she is crying tears of happiness.

She has a lot more sweet parts than I thought.

“But that’s exactly why it is saddening. To the point that I would want to cry.” (Yorishiro)

“Eh?”

“When you learn about the evils I have done in the time you weren’t there, you would definitely end up hating me.” (Yorishiro)

Chapter 73: Underworld down-slope

And then, night came.

“Now that it has become a lot easier to act here, let’s move!” (Karen)

Karen-san stands up filled with energy.

She is fully charged after sleeping.

Compared to that, Yorishiro and I were in a questionable state.

“...What’s wrong, you two?” (Karen)

“No...” “It’s nothing.”

It is because Yorishiro said something like that.

‘When you learn about the evils I have done in the time you weren’t there, you would definitely end up hating me.’

Since the time she said that, the atmosphere between Yorishiro and I has become somewhat complicated.

It is true that I don’t know anything about the things that happened in the 1,600 years I was sealed.

It is way too long of a time to call it a blank.

In that time, several millions of humans must have died and more must have been born.

In this period of time where I was not there, she has been living on. As a God that transcends humans.

“...It is here.” (Yorishiro)

Even within this complicated atmosphere, Yorishiro properly does what has to be done.

The place where the light needle points at, is precisely the place where we are standing.

“But...” (Haine)

“There’s nothing here.” (Karen)

Karen-san and I look at our surroundings, but it is all sand.

Not only a city, there’s not even a single sign of anything around.

“It is okay..... Haine-san.” (Yorishiro)

“Hm?”

“Go ahead.” (Yorishiro)

It is sad that I can understand what I have to do from just those few words.

“[Dark Matter, Set]” (Haine)

Along with my voice, dark matter coils around my hands.

Reversing the gravity of it, I make it so it creates a repulsive force...and release it.

With that repulsive force between materials, the light sand was blown away and scatters.

And then, what appeared below that was...

“Oh?!”

No matter how you see it, it can only be seen as something manmade.

“Amazing! What’s this?” (Karen)

“A stone...slab? Gate? Lid?” (Haine)

At any rate, it is incredibly flat and big. It is no doubt made of stone, but the detailed carvings at the surface were eloquently indicating that this is made by humans.

“To think something like this was buried under the sand!!” (Karen)

But we still don’t know what in the world it is.

This beautifully carved stone slab is big enough that all three of us could easily lie down on it with space to spare, moreover, the part that bothers me the most is that there’s a gap right in the middle of it that runs all the way from bottom to top.

There's no doubt it can open.

As I thought, this really is a gate.

A gate that divides the surface and the underground.

The problem is how to open it...is what I was thinking when...Yorishiro approaches the gate, places her hand on it, and pours light divine power into it.

The carvings that were engraved on the surface had light divine power pass freely through them.

And then...

Rumble rumble rumble, the gate opens on its own.

"?!!"

"This is...?!" (Karen)

Karen-san and I were so awestruck that we couldn't say anything.

What was after the opened stone gate were stairs. Moreover, stairs leading underground.

"Now then, let's go." (Yorishiro)

Yorishiro advances.

We also hurriedly follow behind her.

I wonder how far below these stairs lead to.

We were already underground, and adding that it is night, it was so dark that I couldn't even see my own hands.

"Karen-san, make a light." (Yorishiro)

"Y-Yes!" (Karen)

Karen-san gets startled, and from her waist, a clattering sound is made. So she unsheathed her holy sword, Saint-George.

"Pour a bit of light divine power and..." (Karen)

By doing that, the holy sword lightens up dazzlingly, and the stairs are light up as if it were broad daylight.

The light divine power is convenient.

“Hey! Hey, Yorishiro!” (Haine)

I also take out my ethereal flashlight and chase after Yorishiro who continued going down.

“You...haven’t you been weird for a while now?” (Haine)

“What is?” (Yorishiro)

“What, you ask. After all the events that are occurring, you are not getting fazed at all.” (Haine)

We removed the sand, found the gate, opened the gate, and continued on; every single one of them was brought by Yorishiro, but there wasn’t a single sign of hesitation as she did those.

That was as if...

“It is as if I knew everything from the beginning?” (Yorishiro)

“As I have said before, don’t read my mind.” (Haine)

“That might be the case-desu wa. The location of the Underworld country, where to enter, how to open the door; if I knew everything from the beginning, it would be a given that I would know about those things, wouldn’t I?...And what will be happening after as well.” (Yorishiro)

“?!”

At some point in time, there were no more stairs.

And then, the place we arrived at was a big space like that of a hall.

Moreover, at that place...

“There’s someone?” (Haine)

A black shadow is standing right at the center of the hall.

It wasn’t some sort of metaphor, it really was black, and its outline was so blurred that I could only call it a shadow. It was barely maintaining the shape of a human.

But it was by no means human.

“Monster?!” (Karen)

Karen-san also noticed the abnormality and takes a battle stance.

But that’s not right. That’s not a monster.

Monsters are pseudo-living beings that were created by hardening divine power. You can’t sense the oscillation of the soul inside a hollow existence like them.

But that shadow...I can certainly feel it.

It is travelling through the space here and reaching clearly to me...the cadence of a soul.

“I-I am...”

The shadow speaks.

With only that part alone you can tell that it differs from monsters.

But the thing that truly surprised me was not there, it is what it said next.

“I am the Dark God...Entropy...”

Chapter 74: Shadow

“I am the Dark God...Entropy...”

The shadow repeats the same thing.

But, what’s the meaning of this?

There’s no way that thing is the Dark God Entropy. The real Dark God Entropy is right here after all.

“Dark God... Is it saying that this one is the Dark God Entropy-sama?!” (Karen)

Karen-san had also fallen into confusion.

The objective of this journey...moreover, the target that we shouldn’t have been able to find...has appeared right in front of our eyes after all.

“I...have never seen a God with my own eyes though. But it is certainly not a human, and now that I look carefully, it is different from a monster as well. Then, is it really a God?!” (Karen)

No, it isn’t. Karen-san’s judgement is wrong.

It is true that this isn’t a human or a monster. But even so, it is rash to call it a God.

Specially the Dark God Entropy, there’s no way.

The reincarnation of the Dark God is right here after all.

As long as I am the Dark God, there’s no way that this one is the real one.

Then, what is this thing that’s calling itself with my name?

At the very least, it knows the name Entropy. With only that, it turns into a hard to ignore mystery.

I am supposed to be a hidden God that was sealed 1,600 years ago and no one knows of.

“ ... ”

Karen-san and I were confused, but when I take a sidelong glance at Yorishiro,

I could see that only she was calm.

What should we do in this situation?

Unable to read the situation, we couldn't make a careless move.

The one who moved the situation was that...the dark shadow.

"I am...the Dark God...Entropy."

"Eh?!"

The figure, that was barely maintaining the human silhouette, crumbled, and moves quickly in a form like that of a thick line.

And the place that it was moving to was...

"Karen-san! Watch out!" (Haine)

"Eh?!"

Right before it was about to hit her, the holy sword repels the lunging shadow.

Good, she properly guarded from that. But...

"As I thought, it really is an enemy!" (Haine)

That's what it must mean if that thing attacked us.

It still is an existence that's filled of enigma, but there's no choice but to fight back.

"[Dark Matter, Set]!" (Haine)

Several thousands, several millions of jet black particles spring forth from both of my arms, become a mass, and create a black swirl.

This is a brutal swirl formed of dark matter that erases earth, water, fire, and wind the moment it makes contact with them.

Moreover, it also possesses a second property that is gravity control. Even against things that are not composed of divine power, it still possesses strong suppression power.

"Eat this!!" (Haine)

I release the black swirl towards the black shadow.

Now, what will you do? Even if it's a lie, you are calling yourself the Dark God. Show me how you are going to deal with the dark matter!

But the shadow didn't confront the dark matter directly, it turned long and narrow and jumped away.

"Damn it, escaping?!" (Haine)

Moreover, those movements are a lot more agile than I expected.

If it leaves the range of the light that Karen-san's holy sword is creating, the human eye is unable to keep up with its speed.

"I will assist you, Haine-san! I will add a bit more light divine power, and...!" (Karen)

Karen-san increases the amount of light divine power she is pouring in the holy sword.

When she does that, the blade releases even more light, and lights up an even larger sphere.

Okay, with this, even if the shadow escapes far away, we will still be able to see it without losing sight of it.

"You can't! Karen-san!"

At that moment, a strained scream resounds. The one who let out that voice was...

"Yorishiro?!"

Yorishiro, who has been acting calm all this time as if she knew everything, was suddenly agitated.

But I didn't have the time to think about this.

That shadow had turned into a line as it springs around, and attacks Karen-san.

"Ei!"

Karen-san once again deflects it with her holy sword and avoids a direct hit.

But, why did the shadow suddenly change its target to Karen-san?!

“What’s this all of a sudden?!But as a hero, I just have to shake off the sparks that come flying.” (Karen)

“Karen-san!” (Haine)

“Haine-san, please leave this to me, you protect Yorishiro-sama! In this narrow underground, I can’t utilize the wide-ranged ‘Holy Light Sword’. In that case, I will concentrate the light divine power into one spot and...!” (Karen)

She adjusts the aim with the tip of her holy sword, and...shoots.

“[Holy Light Line]!!” (Karen)

The blade of the holy sword turns into light and stretches.

Accurately speaking, it is a line shaped divine power that was shot out from the holy sword, and it looked as if the blade itself had stretched.

That light thorn pierces through the shadow that was moving around at high speed.

“Yay! I hit it!” (Karen)

To think she would be able to hit it in one go against a target that was making such crazy movements, as expected of a hero.

But...

“You can’t! This is not good!” (Yorishiro)

Yorishiro screams once again.

“It is not that the attack hit the target, that child went itself to be hit! You can’t give light divine power to that child!” (Yorishiro)

By the time we noticed something was wrong, it was already too late.

After receiving a direct hit from the attack of Karen-san, we thought that it would get injured and weaken, but those expectations were betrayed.

It was the complete contrary.

“I am...the Dark God...Entropy.”

The shadow...consumed Karen-san’s attack and became bigger!

Chapter 75: Underground Battle

“What...is this?!” (Karen)

Karen-san who was the very person that attacked was surprised by the unexpected situation.

This attack that she released intending to damage or kill it, actually made it even livelier. Of course she would be surprised.

Is it correct to call it livelier?

At any rate, that shadow devoured the light divine power of Karen-san and was rapidly growing bigger.

It is already three times bigger than before.

It may be my imagination but, it looks like that jet black color covering its body had grown even thicker as well.

“Karen-san! Stop your attack! It will become bigger and bigger!” (Haine)

“Eh?! Okay!” (Karen)

With all that surprise, Karen-san had forgotten to stop her ‘Holy Light Line’, but after being shouted by me, she stops pouring divine power.

But by the time she did that, the shadow had already grown big enough to look down on us.

“It ate the light divine power... is how I should take this sight as, right?” (Haine)

I infer this from the occurrence in front of me.

With the light divine power attack that Karen-san released as the trigger, it grew in such a splendid manner, so I don’t think there’s any other reason...

But, is that even possible?

“Light...making the darkness bigger? That normally would never happen.” (Haine)

“I-Is that so?!” (Karen)

Preparing ourselves for the attack of the shadow that would be resuming, we gather at one location.

Karen-san probably thinks that her mistake worsened the situation, she looks like she is sorry. I answer that question of hers with the intention of lessening that feeling of hers as well.

“The Dark element...the dark matter is a substance that can erase any element unconditionally. Earth, water, fire, wind; in the face of the Dark element, they are all powerless. But, there’s an exception.” (Haine)

“The light divine power.” (Yorishiro)

Yorishiro takes over and speaks.

“Haine-san looks like he is invincible at a glance, but the only weakness of the dark matter is the light divine power. The only element that the dark matter can’t erase is light, and on the contrary, the darkness is the one that gets erased.” (Yorishiro)

Yorishiro sends me a gaze, and I understood what she was trying to say. I let out a small amount of dark matter.

When Yorishiro hits this dark matter with her own light divine power, the dark swirl scatters and disappears like bubbles. There was not a single sign of resistance.

“Waa?!”

Seeing this, Karen-san was honestly surprised.

“The four base elements have a rotation of weak points within their own group. Darkness is the natural enemy of all of them, and Darkness can’t win against Light. Moreover, Light is slightly stronger than all the four base elements which is an unreliable advantage.” (Yorishiro)

“In other words, it creates a bigger cycle of affinities.” (Haine)

Since I have not been fighting against light, I had completely forgotten about it.

If it’s the ‘Holy Light Bullet’ of Captain Vesage that’s on the level of a small grain, I can still manage, but when it comes to a certain level of skill, darkness

absolutely can't defeat light.

This is the biggest reason as to why I lost in the battle of Gods 1,600 years ago.

"But that's exactly the reason why that shadow is abnormal." (Haine)

The shadow was courteously waiting as we were in the middle of explaining.

It looks like it is adapting to its sudden gigantification and it is taking its time to do it.

"I am...the Dark God...Entropy."

While at it, it repeated the same thing.

Does it like introducing itself that much?

"The light divine power is supposed to be a deadly poison, and yet, it instead got bigger. It is the very definition of an existence outside of common sense! Ah, but, if that shadow is truly a God, common sense wouldn't apply in the first place—" (Karen) "No, that can't be." (Haine)

I am the actual Dark God, and yet, common sense still applies to me.

In the first place, that guy is not a God. Probably.

"At any rate, as long as light doesn't work on it, Karen-san, please step back." (Haine)

And then, I step forward.

"If it's the same element, the one with the stronger power wins. This is the natural rule. I wonder if it will see my dark matter as delicious food as well. Let's have it relish plenty." (Haine) Dark Matter, Set.

With a fist clad with dark matter, I try hitting the giant shadow but...

"It ran away again!" (Haine)

Does that thing not have any intentions of fighting me?

Even when it has become bigger, it is still agile. While evading my attacks, it circumvents me and yet, not even giving me an eye, it rushes forward.

Its destination was...

“Karen-san! Yorishiro!” (Haine)

That bastard, just how much does it aim for women?!

No, that’s not it. Its objective is the light divine power that Karen-san and Yorishiro release.

Now that I think about it, that thing has been aiming for Karen-san persistently from the very beginning. Karen-san, who has been lighting up the pitch black underground with her holy sword.

That thing probably aims for the light users in order to eat their divine power and make itself bigger.

“Run, you two!” (Haine)

I hurriedly tried to chase after it, but I can’t make it in time.

“Kugh!”

Karen-san also takes a stance with her holy sword, but she can’t do anymore than that.

If she attacks with her light divine power, she already knows that it will only make it livelier, and she has no other method of attacking.

Even if she runs away with Yorishiro, it wouldn’t go as she wants.

“...As I thought, it would be better to get away once-desu wa ne.” (Yorishiro)

Is what Yorishiro says.

‘What is she going to do?’, the moment I thought this...

“[Holy Light Destruction Formation]” (Yorishiro)

The floor at the foot of Yorishiro had several cracks appearing, and from those cracks, light leaked out.

The next moment, the floor crumbled along with a thunderous sound and turned into small pieces.

“Uwaaa?!!!”

“Kyaaaaa!!!”

In other words, our footing had been lost suddenly, and while Karen-san and I

raised screams, we had no choice but to continue falling.

It looks like this hall had a lower level, and there, a deep space was spread around.

I feel like we will be falling for a while.

I could utilize the gravity reversal of the dark matter to float, but there was something I had to prioritize.

“Like hell I will let you!” (Haine)

In order to restrain the shadow that was still persistently aiming at both Karen-san and Yorishiro, I jostle with it and choose to fall together with it.

“I am...the Dark God...Entropy.”

“So annoying! Is that all you can say?!” (Haine)

On the other hand, the presence of Karen-san and Yorishiro steadily grew further away.

That’s fine. That’s exactly what you were planning on doing right, Yorishiro?

In the time you are away, I will defeat this guy!

Chapter 76: Country at the depths of the earth

And then, I -Kourin Karen-ended up separated from Haine-san.

When the floor broke, what I saw while we were falling along the rubble was...the shadow calling itself the Dark God and Haine-san jostling as they both went away.

That person did something reckless again in order to save us.

Thinking that, I felt mortified at my own powerlessness, and at the same time, I felt happiness at how the person I love was fighting for my sake; these mix of feelings were making me confused.

The past me wouldn't have understood this kind of feelings at all, and would have fallen in a vicious cycle of confusion and end up panicking. But now, that's different.

I decided to name this inexplicable emotions as 'love'.

That definition returns my heart to serenity and it helps me out a bit.

I love Haine-san, so I am happy when Haine-san protects me. I love Haine-san, so I end up being more worried about Haine-san than any other.

By admitting my woman part, I was able to make an excuse of these feelings that should be scolded as a hero.

* * *

"...Are you okay, Karen-san?" (Yorishiro)

Yorishiro-sama, who had gotten up first, extended her hand to me.

"Ah, yes!" (Karen)

I hurriedly take that hand.

But, how pathetic of me. I should be the one protecting Founder-sama as the hero.

"We ended up falling quite a few ways down. It looks like the materials had become a lot more brittle than I thought." (Yorishiro)

“Yeah, I feel like we fell from quite the height. I am surprised that we were able to come out safely from th— Ah.” (Karen)

I soon noticed the reason why.

My rear was halfway buried -in sand. It is probably something that leaked from the desert. It had piled up and worked as a cushion to soften the impact of our fall.

“.....This is...underground, right?” (Karen)

“Yeah, and we have arrived. The place we were looking for in this journey, the Dark Underworld Country.” (Yorishiro)

“Eh?!”

I pull up my rear from the sand and run to where Yorishiro-sama is and stand to her side, and then, follow that gaze of hers.

What appeared in my sight was the remains of a city that reached far into the distance. In this space at the depths of the earth, there’s many stone-made buildings. Most were partially destroyed or buried in sand; there was already no presence of life.

But even in its current state, I can still understand that there were traces of life in the long past.

Traces of humans living here.

It would be more accurate to describe it as ruins. Historic ruins of a grand underground city.

This is the place we were searching for, the Dark Underworld Country?

“Incredible! Even when it is pitch black underground, I can still slightly tell its contour.” (Karen)

“Looks like there’s moss growing on the surface of the buildings. It seems to be the type that gives off slight amounts of light. Karen-san, perk up your ears.” (Yorishiro)

Being told this by Yorishiro-sama, I concentrate on my ears and...hear some sort of damp sound.

Could this be...the sound of water?

“It must be an underground water source. It seems like the few times that there’s rain in the desert, it soaks into the sand and created a stream. Life appears in places where there’s water. But well, it is mostly vegetation though.”
(Yorishiro)

Saying this, Yorishiro-sama walks around as if confirming the surroundings.

“Thanks to the plants cleaning the air, we are able to breathe even when we are so below ground. Even in this dead metropolis, life still goes on -in a different form.” (Yorishiro)

“But...as expected, just the light of the moss won’t help in seeing well. We can’t confirm our footing well either so...wait please, I will make some light...”
(Karen)

Saying this, I was about to pour light divine power to my holy sword but...

“!! Stop it!” (Yorishiro)

I was suddenly yelled at by Yorishiro-sama and got scared.

“Did you forget what happened just a few moments ago?! That shadow attacked us seeking for light, you know? If you shine your sword again, it will serve as a lighthouse and that child will once again come here-desu wa.”
(Yorishiro)

“S-Sorry!” (Karen)

It is exactly as Yorishiro-sama says.

I could see that shadow-san jostling with Haine-san when the floor crumbled and we were falling.

We didn’t suffer a single injury, so that shadow-san must be safe as well, and there’s a high chance that it is loitering around this city somewhere.

It happened just a few moments ago, and yet, why am I messing up now...

“But, what should we do now, Yorishiro-sama? It is good that we arrived at the Underworld Country, but the passage to the entrance has collapsed, and returning is impossible now. On top of that, if such an unknown *monster* like

that is loitering around, it is important to protect ourselves, you know?” (Karen)
<monster here is written in japanese, instead of the usual ‘monster’ in english>

“There’s no need to worry. We have Haine-san.” (Yorishiro)

Eh?

“We ended up separated from him, but that’s probably the best option right now. He has an ethereal flashlight with him. If he keeps it on all the time, the shadow should be lured to it and target Haine-san. If it’s one vs one, he can show his real strength as much as he wants.” (Yorishiro)

I see...

Against that shadow that absorbs light, I am only a deadweight.

“In that time, we should keep hidden. There’s no need to get worried about the matter of getting out of here either. Haine-san will definitely manage something.” (Yorishiro)

“We are throwing all of it to Haine-san...” (Karen)

When I let out what I was thinking right out of my mouth, Yorishiro-sama giggles in a joking manner.

“Because you know, that’s exactly how it is, right? That person can resolve anything. Save the world when it is in peril, and even the worries of women.” (Yorishiro)

That’s true.

Only a short time has passed since I met Haine-san, but who knows how many times he has already saved me.

He is a lot more of a hero than me.

“That person...is a lot more of a God...” (Yorishiro)

Eh?

Chapter 77: The one that the Gods have approved

At any rate, Yorishiro-sama and I -Kourin Karen-decided to investigate the historic ruins of the Underworld Country that's in front of us.

I am also bothered by that shadow that calls itself the Dark God Entropy, but our original objective was to find this city, and investigate it.

Why did this city fall to ruins? Why did it get buried deep underground?

If we are able to unveil the truth by investigating the ruins, we might be able to get closer to the identity of that shadow.

Yorishiro-sama and I walk at what might have been the path of a street in the city.

It goes through the middle and the width of the road is big.

In the days that the city was still alive, I think that many people had moved back and forth on this road.

But right now, it is a quiet space where there's only rubble and sand scattered around.

"Yorishiro-sama, be careful. It is dark and we can't see what's at our feet."
(Karen)

"Ara, then, want to hold hands as we walk?" (Yorishiro)

"What?!" (Karen)

Without even knowing, I ended up holding hands with Yorishiro-sama as we walk.

For some strange reason, this is making my heart race.

Even if I am holding hands with someone, that other person is a girl like me, moreover, I have my heart set on Haine-san, and yet...

As expected, is it because Yorishiro-sama is way too beautiful?

Even in the eyes of a person of the same sex, Yorishiro-sama is transcendently beautiful. I thought that way even when she was normally

covering her face with a veil. When she took that veil off, that beauty of hers surpassed my imagination. So unfair.

If a person hides her face in normal basis, you would imagine that person as being incredibly beautiful, so isn't the hurdle of beauty supposed to increase when that person reveals her face?

"Ufufufu...walking side by side like this..." (Yorishiro)

"Yes?"

"We look like friends, don't we?" (Yorishiro)

"Y-Y-Yes?!"

I have only been saying 'yes'.

"T-T-T-That's too much of an h-h-h-honor! I am a hero and Yorishiro-sama is a Founder! I pledged at the hero investiture that I would devote my sword to Yorishiro-sama..." (Karen)

"Ara Ara, that's the old stiff Karen-san -desu wa ne. But walking with our hands held like this, seeing each other's naked bodies, and most importantly, loving the same man; isn't this already on the level where it is okay to call us the best of friends?" (Yorishiro)

"T-That's...!" (Karen)

Even if she tells me that, as I thought, someone like me being the friend of Yorishiro-sama is just unthinkable.

A friend is, putting it in other words, an equal person.

No matter how I think about it, I can't consider Yorishiro-sama as an equal to me.

There's the Founder and Hero standing, but there's also what I said before, even if I were to take away the beauty part, I am still far from reaching her level.

For example, in the time of the idol strife, when we were fighting together with Celestis, I was overwhelmed by that person's flashiness and refined charm.

Even with that, I didn't want to lose as a woman in front of Haine-san, so I

ended up saying 'I win'. I was just acting tough there.

And right now, in front of the beauty of Yorishiro-sama, I can't even act tough.

A perfect beauty that would make you wonder if she isn't actually the very representation of a Goddess. Moreover, this person doesn't only have possess beauty and status.

She is also perfect in strength.

Travelling together with her in this occasion, this fact was made even clearer. This person surpasses me -a hero-by lengths and bounds, and her ability to control light divine power is good.

Even that skill of destroying the floor at the battle of the shadow-san, Yorishiro-sama doesn't have a divine tool like the holy sword Saint-George, and yet, she was able to create such destruction with her bare hands.

Normally, no matter how much light element number you have, without a divine tool that amplifies it, a person can't can't bring out enough divine power to destroy things.

Yorishiro-sama overturned such norm.

She probably possesses light element that surpasses mine by a lot; a person that's rarely born with high affinity of her light element.

Even in the 'Needle of Guidance', at first, it was supposed to be me and Yorishiro-sama pouring divine power together, and yet, it ended up with Yorishiro-sama doing it on her own all the way here.

If Yorishiro-sama was not the Founder, she would have been the light hero, no doubt.

Thinking that way, my confidence decreases more and more.

Even Haine-san, he definitely likes her more...

"Sorry, it looks like I have turned your mood sour." (Yorishiro)

The hand of Yorishiro-sama slips away from my fingers.

This is bad. Did my face show how I felt?

"But don't worry. Haine-san will definitely choose you." (Yorishiro)

“Eh?”

“A long time ago, I committed a sin. A big sin that I wouldn’t be able to atone for even if I tried to atone for it. He...still doesn’t know about the details of this sin of mine. But he will know of it in time. When he learns of it, he will not forgive me.” (Yorishiro)

The underground city is dark so I was unable to confirm the expression of Yorishiro-sama well.

But for some reason, I thought that Yorishiro-sama was probably crying.

“That’s why I can’t be together with Haine-san. Being pampered by him is fun and it makes me happy, but that’s as far as I’m allowed to step into. I can’t go further than that. When Haine-san learns about everything and begins to hate me, I won’t be able to take it.” (Yorishiro)

I couldn’t understand the full extent of Yorishiro-sama’s words.

I don’t know what she means about ‘a big sin’, and in the first place, I can’t imagine the Light Founder Yorishiro-sama committing a sin, whether it is big or small.

But she is most likely...unable to forgive herself.

“That’s why, Karen-san, I will cheer you on. Even if I am not by his side, I would be glad of his happiness after all. It might be a rude way of saying this to Karen-san though...” (Yorishiro)

“!!”

“Eh?!” (Yorishiro)

I hold the hand of Yorishiro-sama tightly.

The force was so strong, I ended up surprising Yorishiro-sama. But, I can’t stop this feeling.

“Yorishiro-sama! Please become my friend!!” (Karen)

“Eeh?!”

“Honestly speaking, I don’t understand well what Yorishiro-sama was saying. What I do understand is that Yorishiro-sama is a good person!” (Karen)

If that weren't the case, she wouldn't have sent kind words towards me so many times, she wouldn't have played together with me.

Being pampered by Haine-san together with Yorishiro was truly fun.

If it were with someone who is lying to herself, I wouldn't have had that much fun.

"That's why, Yorishiro-sama, please become my friend. Let's have Haine-san pamper us and trouble us together!" (Karen)

"Karen-san!" (Yorishiro)

"If Yorishiro-sama has committed a mistake, I can't say something as presumptuous as: 'I forgive Yorishiro-sama'. But, I can at least apologize with you as a friend! Please give me the qualification to do that, Yorishiro-sama!" (Karen)

And Haine-san will definitely accept whatever it is.

He is the person I have fallen in love with after all.

It is okay for both Yorishiro-sama and I to be happy!

"Good grief, you really are..." (Yorishiro)

It was so dark, I couldn't see the expression of Yorishiro-sama well.

But, from the hand that I was holding, I could tell that the strength she held me with had strengthened.

"...You are truly my hero-desu wa ne." (Yorishiro)

Chapter 78: I play by myself

“Where am I?!”

I -Kuromiya Haine-was separated from the group and was feeling lonely.

We found an entrance to the underground at the middle of the desert. Advancing there, we encountered a mysterious shadow.

I was unexpectedly having a tough battle against this guy that is using my name without my permission, and fell down here with it, but...this place are the remains of an ancient city underground.

“It is okay to consider this the Dark Underworld Country, right?” (Haine)

Even if I call it a city, there’s already not a single person living here.

The buildings have crumbled, and because they have been buried deep underground, these ruins have barely managed to avoid weathering.

Just like in that poem, did they really fall into ruin because they worshipped the Dark God?

“Or more like, did they really worship me?” (Haine)

The Dark God that was sealed 1,600 years ago and hadn’t done anything at all?

But that shadow...this mysterious being that calls itself the Dark God Entropy has proved that it has some sort of connection with me and this city.

Until I solve what this connection is about in detail, I can’t just leave.

“What’s this feeling...as if I was told that a baby of mine had been born without me even knowing?” (Haine)

In reality, for a God, believers must be that kind of existence.

If I was told there were, I would feel my self-awareness as a God born inside of me.

“...Anyways, for now, I should prioritize regrouping with Karen-san and Yorishiro.” (Haine)

I ended up separating from them in the chaos of that fall after all.

I was jostling against that shadow in the middle of it, but it escaped.

And so, that's how I am currently all by my lonesome self.

If I don't regroup with Karen-san and Yorishiro soon, I might collapse from loneliness.

"But how should I look for the two of them?" (Haine)

From within my baggage, I take out something that looks like a short stick, and turn on the switch of it.

When I did that, it released a shining light.

It is a pocket light that functions with ethereal energy. Ethereal is an incredibly useful energy source. This flashlight apparently doesn't need to be exchanged for a new one for at least 20 years.

In terms of lighting, I can rely on the hero and Founder of the Light Church, but I am truly glad that I actually brought it with me just in case.

It doesn't hurt being prepared.

I choose whichever building is the highest among them and climb to the top of it, and from there, I swing around the flashlight here and there.

I feel like I might call something else at the same time though.

"I wonder if those two will come." (Haine)

I feel like they won't.

It was just my instincts talking here but, I was close to being sure that was the case.

In the first place, if they wanted to, they would have been able to release a light that's several times stronger than this flashlight.

If they are not lighting up in this pitch black place -not even a firefly level of light-it must mean that they are trying to hide themselves.

—They are probably cautious of the shadow.

—They are not going to regroup with me until I defeat that shadow.

“They are really strict girls.” (Haine)

Then, I should continue using this flashlight.

The shadow eats light to get bigger, so it has the tendency of heading towards light craving for it.

The reason it was waiting for us at that hall must have been because it detected the light that Karen-san was releasing from the holy sword, and came rushing towards it.

And even if it's an artificial light that has no divine power, there's enough possibility that it will be lured by it and once again appear in front of me.

But, do I have to swing this flashlight the whole time until it comes?

‘That would tire my arm, what a pain’, is what I was thinking when...

“Uo?!”

My footing suddenly crumbled and, just like that, I make a direct drop.

The building that I was using as footing had collapsed. I slide down along with the rubble and was about to be buried alive.

“That was dangerous!” (Haine)

As expected of ruins that have deteriorated after several centuries without any humans living in it; once you get a bit rough on it, things like this occur.

“Or more like, am I not damaging a legacy here? I have harmed an asset of human history...” (Haine)

At the moment when I was fearing what I had done, something appeared that wasn't destroyed when the building crumbled. It towered over its surroundings without breaking.

“What is that?” (Haine)

Was this something that was inside that building?

It was a single slab that seems to have fallen vertically and has a simple construction; it's made of stone...no, it looks like a mineral of fine quality that has slight transparency.

What is this thing that is colorful in all its body and overwhelms anyone that looks at it?

“A monument?” (Haine)

I thought that way because of the writings carved at the surface of it.

Was the building something made to protect this monument from the wind and rain? Or was it to hide it from someone?

“.....I can read it.” (Haine)

I use the flashlight to check the surface of the monument, and trace it to the writings carved there.

The language utilized is -obviously-completely different from the one currently used, and yet, for some reason, the -how should I call it-soul that was carved together with that writing was telling me its meaning.

The soul that was filled with anger and hate.

What was carved in this monument was...the history of when the Underworld Country was created, and its fall.

79: Bellow

According to this monument, this whole place called ‘Nameless Desert’ was once a fertile land filled with water and green.

The people that lived the first period of humanity didn’t know about the techniques to go against nature and weren’t able to control nature either; it was truly a repetition of becoming one with nature by living and dying.

The one who brought change to this was the appearance of a single human.

The curves of human history have always been brought by the genius of a prominent individual.

Just like how it was in that time; that person had more knowledge than the others, and with that person’s wise decision making, many new techniques were created, rules were made, and created a group of people that were organized by leadership.

It didn't take long for it to become the framework of society.

The place that had this completed framework was the Underworld Country.

It was probably the first nation in this world.

The Underworld Country, in order to bring together the heart of the people that live there, a certain measure was created.

A God.

Believe in the same God and worship it. With that common point, it created a sense of camaraderie between the people, made them cooperate with each other to win against difficulties, and had them share the fruits of that victory.

The God that was worshipped by the Underworld Country as their religion, that is the Dark God Entropy.

* * *

"It really is me?!" (Haine)

I couldn't hold back my confusion after seeing my own name carved clearly on this monument.

So it was real. A Dark God actually existed in the history of humans.

But, I was sealed for 1,600 years and hadn't done anything at all to show anyone of my existence so, how did they even learn of me?

Will that answer appear as I continue reading on?

* * *

...

At any rate, the Underworld Country was certainly primitive, but it still walked onto the path of a nation.

With the cut stones, they create houses, and secure a safe place to sleep in; by plowing the land in the surroundings, they can harvest crops from the cultivated land; resting one day out of the several days of work, they head to the church, offer their prayers to the Dark God, and confirm once again their own affiliation.

This living cycle that had been made distinct increased the efficiency, increased the productivity, increased the birthrate, and raised the worth of humans.

The wealth began to spread to other places, and the Underworld Country had grown into a huge community that was big enough to cover the whole 'Nameless Desert'.

On top of that, according to this monument, this leap in progress was surprisingly accomplished in the time a single human was alive.

The prodigy that appeared at the origin of the Underworld Country.

A wondrous existence that appeared out of who-knows-where, provided them with techniques and principles, and boosted the humans, that were basically just one type of animal, into an intelligent form of life.

That human obviously became the representative of the Underworld Country, stood at the top of society, governed them, and led them.

The name of that human was Izanami.

Izanami was the queen of the Underworld Country.

She preached about the kindness of the Dark God Entropy that had created humans.

Darkness is abyss; from there, everything was born. The ruler of darkness Entropy is the one who created the whole world, and the humans are its children.

Entropy provided night and sleep for the sake of the humans, and advised them to rest whenever they are tired.

The people of the Underworld Country were grateful of Entropy, and offered their prayers.

They also were grateful for their queen Izanami and praised her.

The Dark God and the Wise Queen.

These two factors developed the Underworld Country without any grave errors, and it became an Utopia that would last for millenniums to come.....or at

least that's what it was supposed to be.

* * *

"But..."

I continued reading the monument.

What was written next was about the end of the Underworld Country.

* * *

Invaders appeared in the peaceful Underworld Country.

The humans outside were jealous of the wealth of the Underworld Country, envied it, and went there to steal it.

Of course, the people of the Underworld Country fought in self-defense.

The ones defending were the current nation that had progressed the most in the world; even if they were called invaders, there was no way to lose against these group of people that were on the level of bandits that had barely grown.

But, the barbarians weren't the only ones who attacked them.

Disasters that can't be brought by humans...in other words, natural disasters were attacking the Underworld Country in succession.

As if conspiring with the attack of the barbarians.

The first were locusts; these insects that appeared from the sky were in the several thousands, and when they were right under the crops, they would fly towards it and eat it all.

Next, was a plague. This deathly disease that flowed in the city from the water had spread in the blink of an eye from people to people, killing old people and the children, and also robbing away the life force of the young ones.

On top of that, acid rain fell. It was different from normal rain. These fire rain that smelled rotten melted the stone-made buildings and devastated the once beautiful cityscape.

And in the end, the earth slowly turned into sand, and the once fertile land of the Underworld Country was slowly eroded.

Many disasters befell the Underworld Country, the people and wealth was laid waste, and there was already nothing to steal from them, and yet, the barbarians continued attacking the Underworld Country.

Along with the swinging of axes, jeers rang on.

‘This is the just retribution of God. You heretics that revered an evil God will now fall’, is what they shouted.

The locusts, disease, acid rain, and the desert; was this all a punishment brought by God?

Don’t joke around.

A God wouldn’t do something like that. A God would only watch over the humans in silence. Deciding just and evil on their own convenience and handing down punishment on their whim, that’s not the deed of a God.

You barbarians; the God that you guys worship is the actual evil God.

Interfering with the living of humans, defeating the ones who should win, have the ones that should lose win, distorting the course of history; that’s exactly what an evil God is.

Therefore, I will destroy all of you, and also the four evil Gods that you serve for.

Our God, the Dark God Entropy, wouldn’t put its hands in a fight of humans as the authentic God it is.

But, if you are not going to hand down any punishment against these four evil Gods that have broken this law...

I will become the Dark God Entropy.

And erase all evil.

* * *

“!!!”

This is where the writings on the monument end.

But at the last parts, the several lines at the end, were not shown visually; they were probably made from the raging emotions of the person that created the inscriptions in this monument and were stored just like that in it.

The person that created this monument probably made it at the destruction of the Underworld Country, in order to show their existence.

Not long after, everyone was killed, and the Underworld Country turned into dust and disappeared from history. But, if someone were to transmit the contents of this monument as evidence and understands it, it will serve as proof that they certainly did exist in the past.

This is probably the reason why it was hidden in a building that would soon crumble. The invaders that attacked the Underworld Country will eventually erase the history of the defeated and destroy the monument. In order to avoid that, this was the desperate measure taken in order to hide it from the eyes of the invaders.

“So this is the rise and fall of the Underworld Country...” (Haine)

It was a grander history than I expected.

But, even with this, what occurred in this land was not told in its entirety.

Chapter 80: Underworld Army*

**In Japanese culture, this denotes the Oni that live in hell*

“I am...the Dark God...Entropy.”

And so now, I -Kourin Karen-am in big trouble.

“Geez! Why did it come here?!” (Karen)

It is that shadow-san.

We encountered it when we were in the middle of going down to the underground city; a mysterious enemy.

It looks like a shadow, and it changes its shape dizzyingly and attacks us.

“Yorishiro-sama! Hurry here!” (Karen)

“Karen-san!” (Yorishiro)

Pulling the hand of Yorishiro-sama, we run as fast as we can.

It chases right after us. It has completely locked its target on us!

“We haven’t shown anything that’s similar to light since the time we fell, and yet, even with that, it chased after us. Is it a coincidence? Or maybe...”
(Yorishiro)

“This is not the time to be saying suggestive words!” (Karen)

At any rate, we have to run.

We already learned that our light divine power is nourishment for this shadow-san to make itself bigger.

That means we can’t defeat this shadow-san.

The only one in this party of three members who can defeat this shadow-san is the one who possesses the dark element, Haine-san.

That’s why Yorishiro-sama went through the trouble of separating together with me, in order to not be a burden for Haine-san.

And yet, the shadow-san in question comes to us!

“...Karen-san.” (Yorishiro)

“What should we do?! We are running at full speed but we can’t shake it off! Wait, did you call me, Yorishiro-sama?!” (Karen) What is it in this precarious situation?!

“Please leave me and run.” (Yorishiro)

“Eh?!”

What are you saying, Yorishiro-sama?!

“The chances that shadow is aiming at me are high. Also, you can’t bring out as much speed as you can because you are pulling me as well. If it’s just you alone, you should be able to run faster, right?” (Yorishiro)

“That isn’t reason enough for a hero to abandon her Founder! In the first place, why would Yorishiro-sama be targeted?!” (Karen)

“I saw a light flickering from the distance a while ago. It was probably Haine-san waving the flashlight.” (Yorishiro)

“?!”

I didn’t notice at all though!

“I don’t know if it was to tell us his location or to lure that shadow, but now that the shadow ignored this and has come here, it means that this child doesn’t simply get pulled by light.” (Yorishiro)

“No way!” (Karen)

“At least you should escape and regroup with Haine-san. The light was coming from 4 o’clock, If you run to that direction, Haine-san should be there.” (Yorishiro)

“?!”

Then...!

I let go of the hand of Yorishiro-sama and turn my body around.

The shadow-san that was chasing us from the back was now right in front of me.

“Holy sword Saint-George, I entrust my light divine power to you; change into a blade that cuts away my enemies!” (Karen) The dazzling light that was released from my blade was a visual representation of my piled up frustration!

“You can’t Karen-san! That child absorbs light and...!” (Yorishiro)

I shake off the warning of Yorishiro-sama and release it.

“[Holy Light Blade]!” (Karen)

The released light wave didn’t hit the shadow-san.

It flew above the shadow-san and headed further to the back.

I aimed at a different place. At a part of the Underworld Country’s building where no one is living in anymore, I cut it off with ‘Holy Light Blade’. The building that had been cut had now turned into mere rubble, and the location that it fell onto was, just as calculated, right on top of the shadow-san.

“I did it! Right on target!” (Karen)

I cheer when the shadow-san was crushed by the rubble.

Even if I can’t hit it directly with my light divine power, physical attacks from external factors might work. I don’t think it has been defeated with that just now, but it will definitely work to keep it at bay.

“Yorishiro-sama! Let’s use this chance to go to where Haine-san is!” (Karen)

“Karen-san!” (Yorishiro)

Hearing the shout of Yorishiro-sama, I reflexively bend my body.

Almost at the same time I did this, small pieces of stone flew about. That shadow-san rotated its body like a tornado and blew away the rubble that was crushing it.

“I am...the Dark God...Entropy.”

And then after that, the shadow-san showed its figure as if nothing happened.

“What power!” (Karen)

“Karen-san, run! There’s no reason for you to get hurt here!” (Yorishiro)

“No, there is!” (Karen)

I answer immediately.

The shadow-san that was rushing towards us seems to have grown slightly bigger by absorbing the attack just now, even though it wasn't a direct hit.

"The light hero protects the Light Founder! And more importantly, Yorishiro-sama is now my friend! Of course I would stake my life for a friend!" (Karen)

The shadow-san probably thinks it has us cornered, it stops its approach at full speed and slowly closes the distance cautiously.

That's good. I want to buy a little more time.

"And also, please remember! We still have one more person we can trust in, don't we! There's no way that person would overlook our crisis! Because if he were to do something like that, he wouldn't be able to receive the incredible reward later after all!!" (Karen)

"Karen-san?!" (Yorishiro)

That's why, don't give up. That person will definitely come.

"[Dark Matter, Set]"

Chapter 81: Darkness ≠ Shadow

That was close.

Because by the time I -Kuromiya Haine-had arrived to the place, Karen-san and Yorishiro were being cornered at that very moment.

“[Dark Matter, Set]!” (Haine)

I strike it with my dark matter as I shout.

This attack that had hit properly for the first time had covered the body of this shadow in an instant.

“Ooooh!!”

The shadow raises a voice similar to a scream as it writhes in pain.

“Haine-san!!”

On top of that, the two beauties call my name in sync.

“You really appear on the most opportune times! But...how did you know our location?” (Yorishiro)

“What are you saying? You were the ones who called me.” (Haine)

“Eh?”

In the time I was reading that monument, a dazzling light suddenly shone far away.

The only ones who can bring out that much light are Karen-san or Yorishiro.

But in this current situation where the shadow is roaming around the area, it would be strange for her to release such a conspicuous light.

Even if it's to let me know their location, that would definitely make the shadow find them.

But there's one explanation that makes this action logical; that they have already been found by the shadow.

“And so, I hurriedly rushed here.” (Haine)

“Then, the ‘Holy Light Blade’ of Karen-san just now was not only to crush that child in rubble, it was also to have Haine-san learn of our crisis?” (Yorishiro)

It looks like it was the quick wittedness of Karen-san at work here.

“When you told me that Haine-san was using his flashlight to show his location to us, it clicked in me at that moment. But I didn’t expect him to come this fast! Not even 5 minutes have passed since I used the ‘Holy Light Blade’!” (Karen)

“For the people you love, a man can bend space in order to reach that place.” (Haine)

Well, I actually used the gravity reversal of the dark matter and flew through the sky at the highest speed though.

I practically ignored the backlash to my body, so my legs hurt.

And so, the crucial shadow is covered in dark matter and has been squirming for a while now, but it should creep out from it in time.

“Oh, it is getting smaller.” (Haine)

But it is still bigger than the first time we encountered it though. It is more like it got a bit smaller after swelling up a lot.

Well, the fact that it has gotten smaller is proof enough that dark matter does work on it.

“I am gradually getting it -this thing’s identity.” (Haine) It resurfaces in my mind...the words that were carved in that monument.

*‘I will become the Dark God Entropy.
And erase all evil.’*

“I am...the Dark God...Entropy.”

The shadow chants my name as always.

“No, you are wrong...” (Haine)

And so, I state it -the obvious truth.

“You are not the Dark God. And that power you control is not dark element either. I have finally understood. Your power, the true essence of it. That’s...

light.” (Haine)

“Eh?!”

The first one to raise a voice of confusion was Karen-san.

“What does that mean, Haine-san?! The power of that shadow-san is...light? But there’s no way... even though it is so dark and not shining at all?!” (Karen)

“It is probably changing the light divine power in some sort of way. That’s why it gets bigger when it eats light. By altering it, it is able to absorb energy of the same element.” (Haine) For example; in the places where there’s light, shadows can definitely be created.

If there’s light, and there’s something in front of it, the object will obstruct the light and a shadow will be created.

The stronger the light, the darker and deeper in color the shadow will be, and at times, it can get longer and bigger.

Just like how this guy is eating light and becoming bigger.

“In other words, this guy’s element is ‘shadow’. At a glance, it looks like darkness because it is black and darkish, but it is not. By using something with substance as an intermediary, it has changed light into shadow. It is a light user. Isn’t that right, Yorishiro?” (Haine)

“.....”

There was no answer from Yorishiro.

But inside of me, my hypothesis had already changed into conviction.

*‘I will become the Dark God Entropy.
And erase all evil.’*

Where there’s light, shadows can be made. In order to make a shadow, there’s the need of something with substance that obstructs the light.

And what is that something?

The first thing that comes to mind is a body -a human body.

Using a human body as its intermediary, it is able to change the light divine power into pseudo-darkness -or in other words, shadow.

If there's such a technique, and there's someone that has been consumed by anger and hatred to the point that it renders that person unable to control it...

Therefore, I will destroy all of you, and also the four evil Gods that you serve for.

I will become the Dark God Entropy.

And erase all evil.

The identity of this shadow is...

A human that had its shadow power go crazy and was engulfed by it.

Chapter 82: The Goddess' Past

I committed a sin.

The first sin that I -the Light Goddess, Inflation-committed; betraying the person that I love.

In the Genesis era, because of the birth of humans, the first friction between us Gods occurred.

The Dark God Entropy, who I love, adored the humans. On the other hand, the other Gods claimed that the humans should be ruled over like the other living beings.

At first, I didn't really support any of the two opinions.

But, if it's to make my beloved Entropy happy, I thought it wouldn't be bad to raise the humans into living beings of higher-order along with him. That's all I thought of this.

In this time, there was one God who threw mud into my heart.

"Entropy-sama seems to treasure the humans more than you. At this rate, all his love will be taken away by a lower lifeform, you know?"

For the first time as a God, these emotions called doubt and envy had surfaced.

He will choose the humans over me.

As if trying to fight against this doubt inside of me, I stood on the enemy side.

There was the need to subdue this friction between Gods. He will definitely avoid a fight against me. Knowing this, as long as we can reach a compromise with the other Gods...

I had such faint hopes.

But...he fought.

Even with a despairing situation like 5 vs 1, he still fought.

Why?

Does he really love humans more than me?

Even against 5, even when I stood there, he still decided to take the side of humans and fought alone.

The fight ended, and in the moment I had to seal him with my own hands, for the first time in my life, I felt like my chest was going to burst open.

He definitely won't forgive me.

I have perpetrated a sin that I wouldn't be able to atone for even in an eternity. That's how I thought at that time.

But...this was just the beginning of my true sin.

After the Dark God Entropy had been sealed, the four base element Gods began to act selfishly.

The Fire God Nova exercised atrocities at times towards the surface world; The Water God Coacervate induced falsehoods to the humans, stirred up conflicts, and enjoyed watching it; the Wind God Quasar vanished into his own side; and only the Mother Earth Mantle respected my will and obeyed me.

Within all of this, just how was I going to have Entropy forgive me? I was only thinking of this.

For the sake of humans, he fought a fight that he would inevitably lose.

He loved the humans that much. If I were to do something for the sake of these humans, when he comes back, won't I be able to soothe him a bit?

Thinking this way, I decided on realizing that dream he was trying to accomplish.

By showing the humans the path of progress, I thought about supporting them.

But for the sake of that, I would have to tread with care. Because the opposition of the four Base Element Gods would be inevitable.

Even if I am one of the poles, I don't have as much advantage against the four Base Elements as Entropy. On top of that, the seal on Entropy at that time was incredibly firm and couldn't be released without the cooperation of all five

Gods.

In order to welcome Entropy into this world again, I couldn't displease the four Base Elements.

And so, instead of acting as a God, I decided to guide the humans as a human myself.

With a human vessel, I will reincarnate as a human and raise the humans within their own society. And then, the human me was named Izanami, and became the leader of a certain group of people.

We created techniques and arranged rules. My group of people was becoming visibly bigger with time and got wealthier.

Those were enriching days that I didn't have in the Genesis era.

I felt like I slightly understood the feelings of him wanting to get involved with the humans.

And so, in the process of raising this community of people, I tested doing a playful thing.

I knew that this would be a valid method to unite the hearts of the people.

In order to put this method to practical use, I decided on uniting the people under one symbol.

The symbol I prepared for this was...the Dark God Entropy.

The humans will worship the Dark God, respect him, and with that common point, they would recognize each other as comrades.

When the seal is undone and Entropy returns to this world seeing all this people loving him and respecting him, he will definitely be surprised and be happy. That's what I thought.

At first, I was incredibly motivated in putting this plan in track.

A part of what I did for this was conferring the 'shadow' power to humans.

As the Light Goddess, I can't confer the dark power. But creating 'shadow' with light by using the body of humans as intermediary was a relatively easy technique.

I utilized this 'shadow' as a substitute for darkness and spread it to the humans as the blessing of the Dark God Entropy.

After learning to control the 'shadow' as if they were their arms and legs, the humans developed even more, and the community grew bigger and bigger.

The land that I ruled over as the Queen Izanami was at some point in time called the Underworld Country, and by the time my body was all wrinkles, it had already grown into a big nation that was equal to no other in this world.

But, I overdid it.

There's no way a community of humans that had become so big wouldn't fall in the eyes of the four Base Elements.

The human civilization that had developed heavily had been seen as arrogant by the Gods. On top of that, the fact that the Underworld Country worshipped the Dark God Entropy had angered them. Because Entropy had been defeated, they were under the impression that they were superior to Entropy.

Their anger attacked the Underworld Country in the form of divine punishment.

Locusts, plague, acid rain; on top of that, invaders from outside that were influenced by their will had pushed the Underworld Country into the verge of destruction.

Even when it had reached that state, I couldn't return to being the Light Goddess Inflation to stop the foolish four Base Elements.

All of them were the key to unsealing Entropy.

If I were to injure any of the four Base Elements, the return of Entropy would be pushed to a length of time that's almost like an eternity.

Rather than the humans I raised and guided, I ended up choosing Entropy.

That is my second sin. A sin that's helplessly heavy.

But what made it even more unsalvageable was the fact that my sin didn't end with just that.

...There was a young one named Doraha.

A person that was born in the Underworld Country, in the age when it had been officially established as a nation.

Since the time that person had grown aware, that person was filled with faith towards Entropy, and on top of being used to controlling the 'shadow', it was a level higher than the others.

By the time Doraha had grown into a healthy young one, there was no other person as good in utilizing the shadows in the Underworld Country, and I -the Queen Izanami-conferred this child the highest title of the guardians... I conferred her the title of hero.

And then, in the time the Underworld Country was heading towards destruction, the one who fought back the most, choked and cried the most... was Doraha.

She ran about in order to drive away the locusts, she embraced her family that was desecrated by the plague and cried, and even utilized her own body as a roof to protect the people from the acid rain.

She confronted the invaders that were sent by the four Base Elements, refuted the insults hurled at the Dark God, and was enraged at this irrationality.

Even when I witnessed the figure of Doraha fighting bathed in blood and shedding her own, I didn't lend her my help.

In time, Doraha's hatred towards the Gods had increased so much that she was consumed by the 'shadow' and had become 'shadow' itself.

In that form, Doraha had become a dangerous existence.

The special trait of the 'shadow'; absorbing light and making it its own power. Now that Doraha had become 'shadow' itself, this trait had lost all limiters. She began eating all light beginning with the sunlight itself, and had become a monster that would not stop growing bigger even if it were to cover the whole world.

At this rate, the world would be engulfed by Doraha.

At that time, I finally took off the body of the queen Izanami and returned to being the Light Goddess Inflation, utilized all my divine power, and sealed that

child -to the very depths of the underground together with the Dark Underworld Country.

If it's underground where light doesn't reach, Doraha would not be able to get the light energy to increase her size.

In this way, I had send that child to an underground life of solitude, wandering around for several centuries.

This is...an unforgivable sin of mine.

Chapter 83: Regret of the Goddess

“I am...the Dark God...Entropy.”

The fight between the shadow and I -Kuromiya Haine-was reaching its climax.

At first, I was agitated by its strangeness, but after dealing with it in a calm manner, those aren't movements that I can't keep up with.

In order to avoid Karen-san and Yorishiro from being attacked, I enclosed the both of us in a wall of dark matter, on top of that, I slowly reduced its scope to strangle its specialty which is its speed.

By nature, the light element should have an absolute advantage against the dark element, but because of the transformation of light into 'shadow', it looks like this advantage has been lost.

Every time it grazes the dark matter, it loses volume, and has already returned to the size we first met it with.

“I am...the Dark God...Entropy.”

I can mostly guess what this guy actually was.

It was a human. Moreover, a person that loved the Underworld Country deeply and fought fiercely to protect it.

A warrior.

Its homeland, that wrath towards this irrationality; I could understand it to the point of hurting when reading the writings of that monument.

The anger...and sorrow it felt to the point of changing itself into this. There's not many humans who possess such intense emotions.

“That's right. This child is actually...a child that possessed quite the rich emotions.”

“?!”

By the time I noticed, Yorishiro was already standing right by my side.

She entered the dark matter sphere?!

“This shouldn’t be a surprise right, Haine-san? You already made it clear a while ago that darkness can’t win against light.” (Yorishiro)

Yorishiro makes a mysterious smile.

Looking at the hole in the dark matter that connects to the outside, I could see that Karen-san had fallen completely unconscious.

“Don’t worry. I just had Karen-san sleep. She has become my friend, so she will definitely go against what I am about to do.” (Yorishiro)

“What are you planning on doing?” (Haine)

I immediately ask.

“I have understood most of everything. This person called the Queen Izanami that was said to have raised up the Underworld Country, that was you, right? A reincarnation that spanned before this current body of yours as Yorishiro. The one who spread the Entropy religion was also you; you are also the one who taught them the technique to change light divine power into ‘shadow’. Were you intending on creating an Utopia with me as the centre?” (Haine)

“As expected of Haine-san.....No, my beloved Dark God Entropy. It looks like you have seen through everything-desu wa ne.” (Yorishiro)

Since she has brought that name, it must mean she intends to have a talk as Gods.

“Is this the sin you were speaking of?” (Haine)

“That’s right. In order to distract myself from the loneliness of losing you, I tried to guide the humans on your behalf. It was in the time when the history of humans was literally at its first steps.” (Yorishiro)

And the four Base Elements destroyed this.

The disasters that were written in that monument were truly the way those guys would mess up the world. Adding to that, the humans that attacked the Underworld Country must have become the foundation for the fire, earth, wind, and water churches.

“That shadow was originally a human living in the Underworld Country. A person that could be called virtuous. An orphan that was raised by my hands

and got along quite well with her siblings that were in the same circumstances. After growing up, this child showed rare talent, and became strong enough to be bestowed the title of hero.” (Yorishiro)

“In other words, this shadow was the first hero in this world.” (Haine)

“But that way too strong ‘shadow’ power ended up harming that child. Engulfed by the ‘shadow’, this child became ‘shadow’ itself with the only thing in its mind being to eat light divine power. Fire, water, earth, and water won’t work either. The only way to defeat that child would be...Haine-san, the dark divine power of yours.” (Yorishiro)

“Are you telling me to kill it?” (Haine)

“You are the only one who can. At this rate, that child will escape from this place. If she manages to get under the sunlight, she will absorb the light and grow infinitely bigger. The world will be covered completely by this child. Not even a God would be able to stop that.” (Yorishiro)

Right.

This guy abandoned its humanity because of its desire to kill the evil Gods. If that power were not enough to match a God, it would be too saddening.

“So this was your objective from the very beginning?” (Haine)

“That’s right. Since the time I undid your seal, I wished for you to do this. If I were to spread the name of the Dark God Entropy, one day you or Karen-san would investigate it, and will eventually reach the Underworld Country, and then, you would meet this child. That’s what I hoped would happen.” (Yorishiro)

I see.

Since the time we found out the existence of the Underworld Country, the flow of events to reach here were way too smooth, which felt really out of place.

Now that I think about it, until we encountered the shadow, it felt too mechanical. The pieces were falling perfectly.

There’s no doubt that Yorishiro wanted to bring me to the Underworld Country as soon as possible.

But in that case...

“Why did you do it in such a roundabout way?” (Haine)

Wouldn't it have been okay to request it the moment I was unsealed?

“I wanted you to kill this child the time you understood how this world works. Before you killed this child, I wanted you to know about the foolishness nesting in this world, its ridiculousness, and that this child is not a calamity but a victim. Without those, it would be way too pitiful.” (Yorishiro)

The gaze of Yorishiro was poured at that shadow.

Her profile was beautiful, but just like before, I felt the shadow of an old woman tired of living.

If it's now, I can tell the identity of this feeling.

At that time, she wasn't the Light Goddess Inflation or the Light Founder Yorishiro, but the queen of the Underworld Country, Izanami.

“I am...the Dark God...Entropy.”

It probably has already lost its ability to think and reason.

It simply moves with its hatred towards the Gods and the world; a flimsy shadow.

“I am sorry...for taking so long.” (Izanami)

Yorishiro...the Light Goddess Inflation... the queen of the Underworld Country, Izanami, spoke to this shadow.

“Being in such a gloomy place all alone must have been pretty lonely. But today will be the end of this. The Dark God Entropy you respected so much has finally come for you... in order to drop the curtains of your pain.” (Izanami)

“I am...the Dark God...Entropy.”

I don't think the shadow understands her words.

These words were probably words of repentance.

“But rest assured. At least at your death, I will not let you feel lonely. I will accompany you.” (Izanami)

“Hey?!” (Haine)

“This is the least I can do to atone. Sadly, I can’t die as a God. That’s why, at the very least, I will offer this body of Yorishiro to accompany this child. Haine-san, please, crush this child and I together with your dark matter.”

Chapter 84: Extinguish and rebirth

Slap

A sound echoes in the pitch black underground city.

It was the sound of me slapping Yorishiro's cheek real hard.

"H-Haine-san?" (Yorishiro)

That must have been quite shocking for Yorishiro, she looks back at me dumbfounded while holding her slapped cheek.

"I will forgive you with this much!" (Haine)

I say this with a strained voice.

"You love me right? It must have been quite painful to have your loved one slapping you. That should serve as punishment. You have...already suffered plenty enough." (Haine)

"Haine-san..." (Yorishiro)

Also, the one who should really be punished is me.

There were people who worshipped the Dark God Entropy, and yet, as a God, I wasn't by their side in their time of peril and was in deep sleep; I let them all die without helping them at all.

At this occasion, the problem is not that I didn't know.

I probably...neglected my duty as a God.

"I am...the Dark God...Entropy."

And in the time we were arguing, the shadow didn't show any new movements and stayed nailed on the ground.

It has been exhausted to an extreme with all the fighting it has gone through. Having its shadow body shaved off by the dark matter, its size is already less than that of the first time we encountered it.

"...I am sorry."

I face that shadow and say this.

“I am...the Dark God...Entropy.”

“You are not; you are a human. A human that can burn with anger for the sake of humans. That anger has changed you this much. The responsibility of this also lies in me. I am sorry.” (Haine)

At the very least...I should put an end to this as an atonement.

Dark matter overflows from my hands.

“I am...the Dark God...Entropy.”

“No, I am the Dark God Entropy.”

The dark matter released from my hands covered the shadow entirely.

Now that it has gotten as small as this, it can't resist and escape anymore.

Being engulfed by the dark divine power that erases all divine power, the tragedy that was born from the dream of the Light Goddess...has now disappeared from this world.

* * *

“It is over now.” (Haine)

“Yes...thank you very much. I am truly sorry!!” (Yorishiro)

Yorishiro was repeating over and over her thanks and apology while crying.

The dark matter is still forming a lump and eating away the shadow until it leaves nothing behind.

“Dark Underworld Country. The metropolis that you created for me huh.” (Haine)

I once again look around the ruins of it.

In the past when this city was still at the surface, in the era where it was still shone by the sunlight, just how many people were smiling and working here?

It is saddening that the only thing I can do now is imagine it.

“Were you the one who sunk this city deep underground?” (Haine)

“Yes, I had to seal this child in a place where there’s not a single ray of light after all. This child that can absorb the light divine power, and the fire, water, earth, and wind element doesn’t work on, this was the only method I could take. That woman...Mantle helped me with it.” (Yorishiro)

“Mantle did?” (Haine)

One of the four Base Element Gods. the Mother Earth Mantle huh.

“She was the only one who wasn’t proactive in destroying the Underworld Country. But because she was pressed by the other Base Elements, she had no choice. She has always been weak to pressure after all.” (Yorishiro)

It is true that when she took the side of Nova and Coacervate in the Genesis battle, it gave out that feeling.

How to call it, a woman that can’t say no.

“She reluctantly brought disaster upon the Underworld Country. That took the form of the desertification hex. The desertification was serious, but it proceeded in a slow manner, and honestly, in the Underworld Country that was already on its path towards destruction, this was not that big of a problem.” (Yorishiro)

And this actually turned into something beneficial in an unexpected way.

Because of the desertification, the ground softened and it was possible to sink the whole city underground to seal the shadow.

“...At first, I did it with light feelings.” (Yorishiro)

Yorishiro says with a trembling voice.

“I wanted to atone for sealing you. The day when the seal was undone and you see that your loved humans have developed and are now worshipping you, I thought you would be quite happy...” (Yorishiro)

‘But, that was the beginning of my mistake...’, is what Yorishiro says.

“I myself became a human and understood something from interacting with them directly -the meaning of what you said. Humans are wonderful. Earnest, cheerful, and possess affection and hatred that surpasses that of Gods. I was able to learn that in the Underworld Country. And at the same time, I learned to

love the humans like you.” (Yorishiro)

“That’s plenty enough.” (Haine)

Even if it took 1,600 years, I can now share this feeling with her.

The life in this land and the affection of the humans has opened the heart of a Goddess.

This is certainly a great achievement. Humans managed to move the heart of a God after all.

“But the other ones are beyond salvation.” (Haine)

The four Base Element Gods.

Learning about the past in this occasion, I understood it once again.

As I thought, Gods are existences that don’t bring anything good for humans.

With a reason that was practically a whim, they destroyed a whole nation, and not only that, even after several centuries, they still misunderstand themselves as some sort of higher existence, and try to make the humans their slaves...their toys.

“There’s the need of a plan to cut off the Gods from humans. And fast.”
(Haine)

Right at that moment, the dark matter that was covering the entirety of the shadow was clearing up.

It must have eaten all the ‘shadow’ divine power.

After that, nothing will be left...

“Hm?!”

It looks like something is left.

...A human? Moreover, a girl.

A small girl of around 14-15 years old was lying completely naked. There’s no doubt that she is the one that was covered completely in the shadow.

In other words...

“Doraha...”

Yorishiro says with a strained voice.

“This is a lie, right? There’s no way... You are...!” (Yorishiro)

The girl opened her eyes before long, and when she raises her body, the first person that came into view must have been Yorishiro. Looking at her direction, she says this,

“Iza...nami...-sama?”

“Yes!”

Yorishiro jumps and hugs her, and then, began to cry a river.

That means, this girl is...the real identity of that shadow.

The shadow hero that was living in the Underworld Country several centuries ago?

Chapter 85: Returning from the Underworld

“I am really sorry!”

The moment Karen-san regained her consciousness, she apologized.

“In such a dangerous situation, to think I would lose consciousness without even participating in the battle! As a hero, that’s way too shameful! What should I say to even apologize for this!” (Karen)

Well, Yorishiro was the one who knocked you out though.

“It is okay, Karen-san. We safely managed to overcome the danger after all.” (Haine)

Even if Karen-san was conscious and was able to fight at a 100%, we were fighting an opponent that light divine power didn’t work at all against, so it wouldn’t have been much different anyways.

Well, I won’t say it out loud. That would be way too pitiful.

“And so, uhm...” (Karen)

“Yes?”

“What happened in the time I was unconscious?” (Karen)

The place where Karen-san was pointing at was where two people are.

“Ufufu.” (Yorishiro)

Yorishiro was carrying a small girl and has been grinning this whole time.

The girl looks to be around 14-15 years old, and her long black hair reached her buttocks.

Her skin color is also darkish, and gave out the impression of her being wild.

She was stark naked when she appeared, but right now she is wearing a change of clothes from Yorishiro, so she is at the very least hiding her skin now.

“...Did this girl really...come out from that shadow-san?” (Karen)

We have already explained the transition of events to Karen-san. Of course,

leaving out the information related to us being Gods.

I have already told them about the monument I found when I was moving alone, and with those things put together...

“Is this girl...a survivor of the Underworld Country that was destroyed several centuries ago?!” (Karen)

“Is what we think.” (Haine)

The ability to change light to ‘shadow’.

That ability must have been pretty normal in the Underworld Country. And the number one strongest user of this was this girl; the strongest warrior of the Underworld Country fought against the foreign enemies. That must have been a hell that wouldn’t be imaginable in this era.

In those streets where blood rained and scenes of carnage were being displayed, this emotionally sensitive girl must have been painted gradually with anger and hatred.

And then, this heart that had been wasted to the extreme...accepted the erosion of the ‘shadow’ and, finally, became ‘shadow’ itself.

I can’t even imagine what kind of state this girl was in inside the ‘shadow’.

But she was probably cut away completely from the laws of nature. She was cut off from even the passing of time, and even when several centuries have passed, her appearance was preserved inside the ‘shadow’.

“It probably would have been impossible to separate the ‘shadow’ with herself.” (Yorishiro)

Yorishiro says while still holding the girl in her arms.

“But the dark matter of Haine-san has the special trait of only eating the divine power. This power managed to sort out minutely the ‘shadow’ and herself without even a 1% of a difference, and erased the ‘shadow’ completely. And because of this, the girl was liberated. But...” (Yorishiro)

Yorishiro caresses the head of the girl melancholically.

The girl narrows her eyes at this action like a cat.

“Izanami-sama...” (Doraha)

“Yes.” (Yorishiro)

“Izanami-sama...” (Doraha)

Even for a 15 year old girl, her way of acting was way too childish.

“She lost her memories, right?” (Karen)

Karen-san asks as if confirming the information she had just been told.

“Yeah. After separating from the ‘shadow’ and regaining her consciousness, she has only been calling Yorishiro as ‘Izanami-sama’ all this time, but hasn’t said anything else...” (Haine)

Her fusion with the ‘shadow’ has been so long that her memory might have been destroyed, or maybe she couldn’t endure the memories of her ruined country; I don’t know which one it is.

She might rearrange her memories after time passes, and there’s also the possibility that she will stay like this forever.

No one knows for certain right now.

“This is fine...” (Yorishiro)

Yorishiro says.

“This child will be living in the new world, so her past memories will definitely get in the way anyways. The Underworld Country is already gone. It has already stopped existing since several centuries. Even if she carries the hatred of her destroyed land as she lives, it wouldn’t prove positive for her at all.” (Yorishiro)

“Yorishiro, what you are trying to say is...” (Haine)

“I will raise this child myself. I will have her walk a new life in Apollon City. This time for sure, I definitely won’t...make a mistake again.” (Yorishiro)

These are probably not the words of the current Yorishiro, but the words of the queen that lived in the past Underworld country, Izanami.

The resolve that only Gods would be able to bring out with their shared past souls.

“Were you able to...take off the weight on your shoulders?” (Haine)

I couldn't not ask Yorishiro this.

She was deeply regretting the fact that she raised the Underworld Country and ended up destroying it.

Has the return of this girl...the hero Doraha, served as an acquittal for Yorishiro?

“It is the contrary, Haine-san. With this, I have finally been able to carry the weight on my shoulders. By carrying this child's life on my shoulders, by walking together with her, in the time she is able to enjoy the new life in this world, I will finally be able to atone for it..... Haine-san.” (Yorishiro)

“Yes?” (Haine)

“Can you please live together with me? Together with the both of us?” (Yorishiro)

“Uh.” (Haine)

This sounds like a widow with a child asking for my hand in marriage.

“...Fine.” (Haine)

“Eh?” (Yorishiro)

“Fine. If you are okay with me, I will do what I can to help you and that child.” (Haine)

“I am so happy!” (Yorishiro)

From there on, Yorishiro smiled happily, and Doraha, who still didn't understand what was going on herself, had a spaced-out expression.

Karen-san was watching this exchange of us a step behind with a puzzled expression.

Chapter 86: To the country of the living

And like this, we finished doing what we had to do at the Underworld Country.

Now that it is over, I feel like everything was dancing in the palm of Yorishiro's hand, but well, if that managed to clear her clouded heart, that's fine.

Next is how we are going to return from this underground that had its stairs crumble with the fight against the shadow.

But it seems that won't be a problem at all.

Because we can fly with the use of the dark matter I control, it was easy to return to the entrance while carrying Karen-san, Yorishiro, and the new member, Doraha.

That's why, right now, we are in the middle of regretting having to leave this historical ruins.

Now that I look at it again, it is an incredibly beautiful place.

An ancient city that stands silently in the darkness. No sounds, just silence. Is it dead or just sleeping? It could be said to be a mystical sight.

"Beautiful..." (Karen)

Karen-san also held the same impression.

Right now Karen-san and I are alone, and we were looking at the Underworld Country from a slightly elevated location.

Yorishiro stayed to watch over Doraha, but it seems like it was because she was being considerate of Karen-san.

In this journey, there hasn't been a single time where Karen-san has been alone with me.

"...But the ones who destroyed this land were...our ancestors." (Karen)

"Yeah." (Haine)

We have also told Karen-san the contents of the monument that Doraha left

behind before she was consumed by the 'shadow'. Along with my own interpretation of it.

The foreign enemies that attacked the Underworld Country were sent by the four Base Element Gods. The humans, that were given power by the four Base Elements in order to destroy the Underworld Country, later created their own community, and the respective churches were formed.

"Then, our Light Church as well is—" (Karen)

'A part of the instigators of this destruction', is what she was about to say, but I interrupt her.

"I don't think that's the case." (Haine)

"Eh?"

My biggest basis for this is that the queen Izanami of the Underworld Country was the incarnation of the Light Goddess Inflation.

She is not so crazy as to order her own country to be destroyed.

But there's no way I would be able to prove this basis of mine to Karen-san, so I have to bring out a different explanation.

"...Uhm, you see, in the monument that Doraha left behind, four natural disasters were written there." (Haine)

Locusts, plague, acid rain, and desertification.

"Each were respectively connected to wind, water, fire, and earth; there were no disasters that related to light. Isn't that proof that the light church wasn't related to the destruction of the Underworld Country?" (Haine)

"Isn't that a bit difficult to take as proof?" (Karen)

"And there's one other thing. When Doraha went mad and became the shadow, the invaders must have been quite scared, don't you think? They were faced with unexpected resistance. Don't you think quite a good amount of people of the Underworld Country were able to escape in that stalemate?" (Haine)

"Ah..." (Karen)

“And the people that managed to escape safely gathered together, and what was created was...” (Haine)

“The Light Church...is what you are trying to say?” (Karen)

That’s probably the case.

The queen Izanami had taken off her flesh body and returned to being the Light Goddess Inflation, and this time, protected the people and guided them as a God.

Different from the fire, water, earth, and wind; this was how the light church was formed.

“...You are incredible, Haine-san.” (Karen)

“Eh? What is?” (Haine)

“Because you know, there’s no proof at all that this is true, and yet, you are talking as if you are sure that is how it happened. It made me believe that this is also how it actually happened.” (Karen)

“Isn’t it okay to believe that?” (Haine)

“Right. Thinking that way, that girl...Doraha-san’s sacrifice by turning into a ‘shadow’ was not pointless. There were lives that were saved thanks to it. So Doraha-san saved a lot of lives -as a hero.” (Karen)

“Yeah, that’s how it is.” (Haine)

Right after Doraha was liberated from her ‘shadow’, I told Karen-san that that’s the name she introduced herself as.

It was actually Yorishiro who knew the name of Doraha in her past life as Izanami though.

“When I look at Haine-san and Yorishiro-sama, I sometimes feel something mysterious.” (Karen)

“Eh?”

“You know a lot of things; or more like, know way too much. It feels as if you two have something different from yourselves inside of you.” (Karen)

“Nah, that’s way too farfetched.” (Haine)

I hurriedly refute her words, but the voice of Karen-san sinks.

“That’s why it feels as if the two of you are connected. How envying.” (Karen)

“Eh?”

At that moment, the face of Karen-san suddenly approached my face, and without stopping at all, it made contact with me; lips and lips.

“This is...the reward this time.” (Karen)

“Eh?”

“The reward for saving us. I promised Yorishiro that I would give you something incredible after all.” (Karen)

After separating her lips from mine, Karen-san says this.

“I won’t lose heart. Even if Haine-san and Yorishiro-sama have a special connection between you both, I will create a connection with Haine-san that will not lose to it! Haine-san, please treasure us both, okay?” (Karen)

“Y-Yes!” (Haine)

My cheeks are probably bright red.

Karen-san also ruminated on what she had just done herself, and must have understood that she had done something big, she suddenly boiled bright red.

“I am g-going to take a look at Yorishiro-sama and Doraha-san!!” (Karen)

And then, she ran away while still embarrassed.

...The actions of Karen-san escalate with each passing day.

“At this rate...marriage will come by next month...” (Haine)

I said it jokingly, but it felt real and made me shiver.

Did Karen-san obtain something from this journey?

This journey was to search for a clue of the existence of the Dark God Entropy in the Underworld Country.

And in reality, the Underworld Country actually existed and we already learned that Entropy was worshipped by them, but further than that should still be a mystery for her.

In my side...I did gain something from it.

That is...the assurance that Gods are not necessary in this world.

I learned about the atrocities that were committed by the four Base Elements in the past when I was sleeping, and I also learned that they are useless for humans, on the contrary, they are actually harmful.

When I just came back to this world, I wasn't really thinking much of it, but as I thought, I really do have to get moving.

Make a plan to completely sever the ties between this world and the Gods.

Chapter 87: The continuation of the legend

The story this time has reached its end.

What comes next is something like sorting out the information for the next step.

“Was it okay to leave the Underworld Country like that?”

For now, we have left the ‘Nameless Desert’ and returned to the Light capital, Apollon City where I once again ask Yorishiro this.

Suddenly bringing back a girl of unknown origins, and suddenly telling the higher-ups of the Church that she will be raising her herself threw them into chaos, but Yorishiro is not the type who would falter at something like this.

“Yeah, I thought that it would be best to have that city sleep for a while more.”

If the existence of the Dark Underworld Country is revealed, it will be a big historical discovery and the whole world would make a ruckus about it.

Every church would send an investigation team, and the once peaceful land might bustle in activity.

“The more that city is investigated, the more unbeneficial facts for the five great Churches will be dug out. They haven’t matured enough to permit this.”
(Yorishiro)

“The city itself might be erased completely.” (Haine)

That land that had been destroyed by the whim of the Gods once, would be destroyed once again by the humans that hold authority. That’s certainly not something I could swallow.

Karen-san was also convinced by that explanation and promised to keep it a secret.

“And so, with this, my duty has finished-desu ne” (Yorishiro)

Saying this, Yorishiro takes out a magnetic compass that’s ornamented quite a bit.

If I remember correctly, this is a treasured article of the Light Church, the 'Needle of Guidance'. By pouring light divine power into it, it would point at the direction of the place one desired.

"That's...actually just a normal compass, right?" (Haine)

"Yeah. It is an antique that one of the Cardinals splurged money to make. It is made of a luxurious arrangement of gold and silver, but the use itself is that of a normal compass. It is something that I was given on a certain day as a bribe."
(Yorishiro)

Light and magnetism have similar properties. By using the light divine power, she can move the compass the way she wants. For the Light Founder and incarnation of the Light Goddess, this must have been a piece of cake.

And, for this girl who has the past life of being the queen of the Underworld Country, Izanami, it wouldn't be strange for her to know of the location of the Underworld Country from the very beginning. As long as she moves the compass needle to the direction she wants...

"So that was only a prop to guide Karen-san and I to the Underworld Country huh." (Haine)

"Yeah, for the sake of properly hiding the past that I am the queen Izanami. An item that shows the location of the thing you desire just by wishing for it; there's no way such a convenient item exists." (Yorishiro)

Saying this, Yorishiro threw the flashy normal compass in the guise of the 'Needle of Guidance' to a drawer in the corner of the room. It is probably the place for things that will never be taken out again.

"It would be problematic if this comes out in a conversation in the future, so let's just say that it was lost in the confusion at the Underworld Country. I am counting on Haine-san to match up the story." (Yorishiro)

"Got it." (Haine)

"And so, Haine-san, what brings you here tonight? You purposely came at the time when Doraha was sleeping. As expected, your business has to do with those troublesome ones, right?" (Yorishiro)

We can finally enter the main topic.

Since the time she had Doraha at her side, Yorishiro's bewitching nature has gone dormant, and in place of that, a feeling of motherhood has been prominent.

Even when I came to her room this late at night, she didn't tease me by saying 'are you crawling on my bed tonight?', which helps me out, and, at the same time, it felt kind of lonely.

"...I want to hear in detail the things that happened after the Underworld Country fell." (Haine)

"Okay... When I took off my body of queen Izanami and returned to being the Light Goddess Inflation, those guys all got surprised and grew flustered." (Yorishiro)

By those guys, she refers to the four Base Elements that destroyed the Underworld Country.

Those guys didn't know that the queen was the incarnation of the Light Goddess Inflation when they destroyed the Underworld Country huh.

"The face they made when they learned the truth, it was like a child who had their prank discovered by their mother. The Mother Earth Mantle got flustered and helped me out in sealing the Underworld Country..... At that time, it would have been fine to scold them and cause a new battle of Gods...but I didn't do that." (Yorishiro)

"Why?" (Haine)

"The first reason was because logic was in their side." (Yorishiro)

"No way." (Haine)

"It isn't. In the past, we five Gods gathered to a united idea of 'humans are below Gods' and sealed you. And yet, I hid the fact that I had gone to the surface world, provided humans with culture, and had them progress. Doesn't that mean I broke the agreement?" (Yorishiro)

Is that how it works?

For me who is in the side of humans, this logic is a bit hard to swallow though.

“I am one of the two poles, but I don’t hold that much advantage against the other four Base Elements compared to you, the Dark God. If I were to try using force to bring it to a conclusion, I might have even ended up like you. If you and I -both poles-were to get sealed, things would have gotten even worse.”
(Yorishiro)

And then, Yorishiro —no, the Light Goddess Inflation said,

“I decided on a plan.” (Yorishiro)

“A plan?” (Haine)

“When the four Base Elements reunited with me, they began lining up excuses. As expected, they said things like ‘you were the one who broke the agreement and made the humans smarter’. And so, I created this mean.”
(Yorishiro)

‘The reason why I ruled and guided them was in order to collect something from the humans’, is what she told the other Gods to gloss over things.

“What in the world did you tell them you were collecting?” (Haine)

“Prayer Energy.” (Yorishiro)

Prayer...

Now that she says it, I do feel like Nova and Coacervate mentioned something like that...

“This is something that I discovered by chance while I was spreading the religion of the Dark God Entropy in the Underworld Country as the queen Izanami. A type of energy in the heart of humans. When the human heart directs pure respect and affection towards a God, that heart will become mellow energy and be send towards the God.” (Yorishiro)

“So that’s what a prayer is huh.” (Haine)

“That’s right. Divine power is another form of heart energy from humans. I mentioned the existence of this to the four Base Elements, and advised them to have a taste of it. And then, they were soon enslaved by it.” (Yorishiro)

The power of human’s prayers...made the Gods drunk and enslaved them.

Are you telling me the human's heart has that much power?

"The Gods that assimilate this Prayer Energy will have their strength increased, and, on top of that, its taste is exceptional. The Gods soon wanted to gather as much prayers as possible and began doing many experiments for that sake. The establishment of a church was a part of it. In order to stabilize the number of prayers, they created an organization that worshipped them."
(Yorishiro)

"And the ones who became the foundation of it were the foreign enemies that attacked the Underworld Country huh." (Haine)

"Just as you have concluded. The four Base Element Gods that had now created churches, ordered them to attack the surrounding settlements to obtain more believers, forced them to join the church, and increased their influence. Humans literally became livestock that offered prayers to Gods. That kind of era continued for around a millennium. It was a hard to endure era. And then, a change occurred." (Yorishiro)

"Ethereal." (Haine)

The machine culture brought by the discovery of Ethereal.

Because of this, the hearts of the humans distanced themselves from the Gods. The energy that was gathered also lessened.

"That's why they utilized a method like monsters and acted such a cheap farce. And when not even that was working, they threw a tantrum, and were driven to kill their own believers without any distinction." (Haine)

"That's right. But the current Gods...can't wipe out the humans anymore -just like how they wiped out the Underworld Country. They wouldn't be able to destroy all the five capitals where the Grand Churches are located and kill all the humans." (Yorishiro)

"Why?" (Haine)

"In the period of time that was close to a millennium, they indulged on the Prayer Energy of humans. This brought an unexpected change in them."
(Yorishiro)

Chapter 88: This must end

“The four Base Element Gods...can’t live without Prayer Energy anymore?!”
(Haine)

“That’s right. They exploited the humans of Prayer Energy for far too long, and drowned too much in its taste. For them, Prayer Energy is already on the same level as oxygen. If they have a shortage of it, they won’t be able to maintain their own existence.” (Yorishiro)

Being told this reality, I was shocked.

At the same time, I have now understood something. So that’s the reason why they were so attached to humans after I returned 1,600 years later.

And it is no doubt the bad type of attachment.

In the eyes of someone like me who knew them in the past, this gave out a really out-of-place sensation.

In the past, the Gods of Creation were a lot more indifferent towards humans. It was as if they didn’t care about them at all.

“So they already can’t live without humans anymore?” (Haine)

“That’s right. If humans fall, the prayers that were supplied would be lost, and at the same time, the Gods would fall as well.” (Yorishiro)

Gods would die?

Something as big as that would occur?

“Then, you, who formed the Light Church as well, have been eroded by the prayer energy?” (Haine)

“I am grateful for the prayers of the people, but I didn’t indulge in them. I managed to notice how dangerous the Prayer Energy was from the very beginning. That’s why I am the same as the time when you were sealed 1,600 years ago.” (Yorishiro)

Hearing this, I was slightly relieved.

But Yorishiro -the Light Goddess Inflation-knew how dangerous the prayers were, and yet, she encouraged the Gods to it while hiding this truth.

How scary.

But that probably shows just how angered she was with the four Base Element Gods that destroyed the Underworld Country.

So those four Base Element guys had changed in such a way in these 1,600 years huh.

It is true that there's a point that bothers. They can't live without humans, and even when they have been driven to such boundaries, they still look down on humans huh.

Truly beyond salvation.

"On the other hand, humans do not need Gods." (Yorishiro)

"Ah, so that's how it is." (Haine)

This is one of the misunderstandings in this world.

Gods are not necessary at all to maintain this world.

The work of Gods is to create worlds.

Once the creation is done, their job is over. There's nothing more to do.

That's why, the Gods that have nothing to do anymore are simply squeezing out the spiritual energy of the ones living in this world. That's all they are doing.

"Even if the Gods need the world, the world already has no need for Gods. In that case, we just have to separate them." (Haine)

"The reason why I made them addicted to the Prayer Energy was...for revenge." (Yorishiro)

Yorishiro said this resolutely.

"They destroyed the Underworld Country that I raised for the sake of my dear Entropy and ended up loving it as much as I love him. This is my revenge. The biggest bottleneck until now has been the seal that the all five of us placed on you." (Yorishiro)

The seal the five Gods placed couldn't be undone without all five Gods.

"But, after waiting more than a millennium for the seal to weaken naturally, I was finally able to undo it by myself. There's already nothing to distress about. Haine-san –no, Dark God Entropy, please remove the harmful existences of this world." (Yorishiro)

"What should I do?" (Haine)

"First of all, the most important thing would be to remove the harm that are the monsters. Those pseudo-lifeforms that have no soul are the villains that the Gods have created in order to maintain the faith to Gods. Once that harmful existence is gone, the need for Gods will finally be gone." (Yorishiro)

Completely eliminating monsters huh.

Now that I think about it, Coacervate said this: 'We Gods have created Mother Monsters that can give birth to monsters infinitely and released them into the world'.

"So we just have to defeat the fire, water, earth, and wind Mother Monsters that are somewhere in this world." (Haine)

"Because the faith has decreased, the weakening of the four Base Element Gods has accelerated. In order to create Mother Monsters, there's the need to pour several tens of times more divine power than that of the Fire Cow Phalaris and the Great Sea Dragon Hydra Serpent. Once the Mother Monsters are defeated, they probably won't be able to make one again." (Yorishiro)

So what must be done is already in sight huh.

"Light Goddess, are you fine with that?" (Haine)

I ask just to confirm.

Because she is also one of the six Gods that created this world after all.

"I don't mind. At any rate, I am currently Yorishiro, one of the humans that lives in this world. If there's an option that can bring good to the humans, it should be executed without hesitation." (Yorishiro)

"Right. Let's just think about what we should do as Gods after our current lives are over." (Haine)

In this way, we began to act.

For the sake of humans and not for the sake of Gods; for the sake of recovering a world that humans can live in.

“With that wrapped up...” (Yorishiro)

“Hm?”

The look of Yorishiro suddenly changed.

“Haine-san, is it true that you kissed Karen-san?” (Yorishiro)

“Ugh!”

Why does she know that?!

Even though I kept silent about it because I knew that it would definitely be a pain if it were known!

“Karen-san disclosed it to me herself. ‘I am sorry for stealing the march’, she said. She really is a honest girl to the core. Compared to that, Haine-san, did you think it would not be a problem as long as it wasn’t discovered?” (Yorishiro)

“Uhm, no no no...” (Haine)

“So for me it was a slap on the cheek, and for Karen-san it was a kiss in the lips huh. It truly shows the difference in treatment here-desu wa ne.” (Yorishiro)

Is she talking about the slap I gave her for her sake?!

After hearing her revenge plan against the four Base Elements and what is happening right now, I am now convinced; this woman is quite vindictive.

“No you see, that slap was something I did exactly because I see you as someone important...” (Haine)

No, that’s not it. What I have to say right now is not that.

“You said it before, right? That once I learned about the sin you committed in the past, I would hate you.” (Haine)

“Y-Yes...” (Yorishiro)

“It didn’t make me hate you, you know? I am truly sorry for making you carry

so many things on your back all by yourself in these 1,600 years.” (Haine)

And then, I hugged Yorishiro.

I held admiration towards this girl that has been living under many names for a long time.

“Haine-san, as I thought, I do want to live in this body with all I can-desu wa. As the Yorishiro that can live in the same time as you. Give birth to your child and raise it; have Doraha grasp the happiness that she was unable to grasp in her time at the Underworld Country; and I also want to get along with Karen-san in all that time.” (Yorishiro)

“You have a lot of wishes. But, that’s exactly why life is long.” (Haine)

“Yeah. Please fill my life...with a lot of wishes.” (Yorishiro)

Without saying any more than that, our lips overlap.

It was a sweet transient time before the fierce battle that will be unfolding from here on. <TL: in the sheets>